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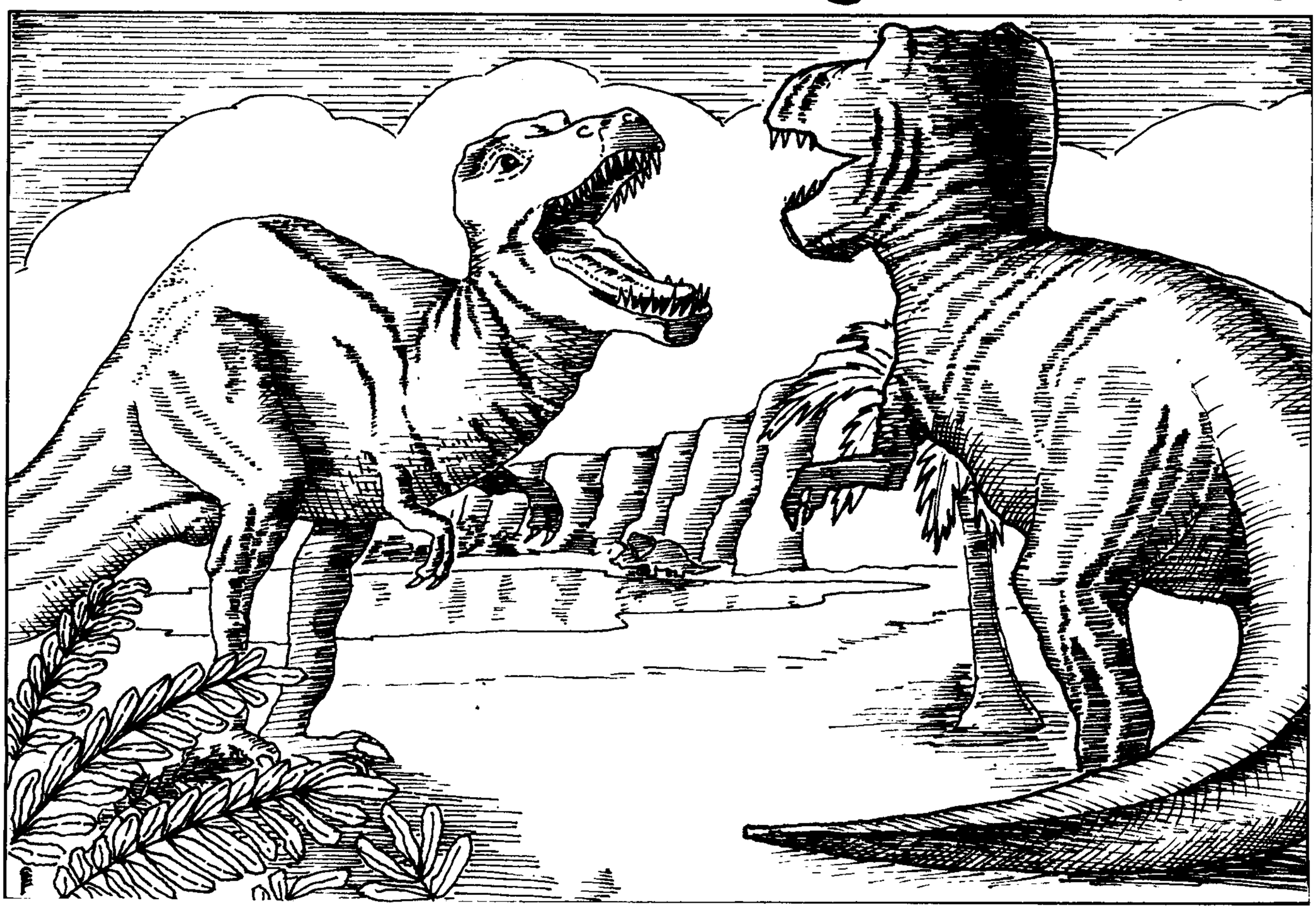

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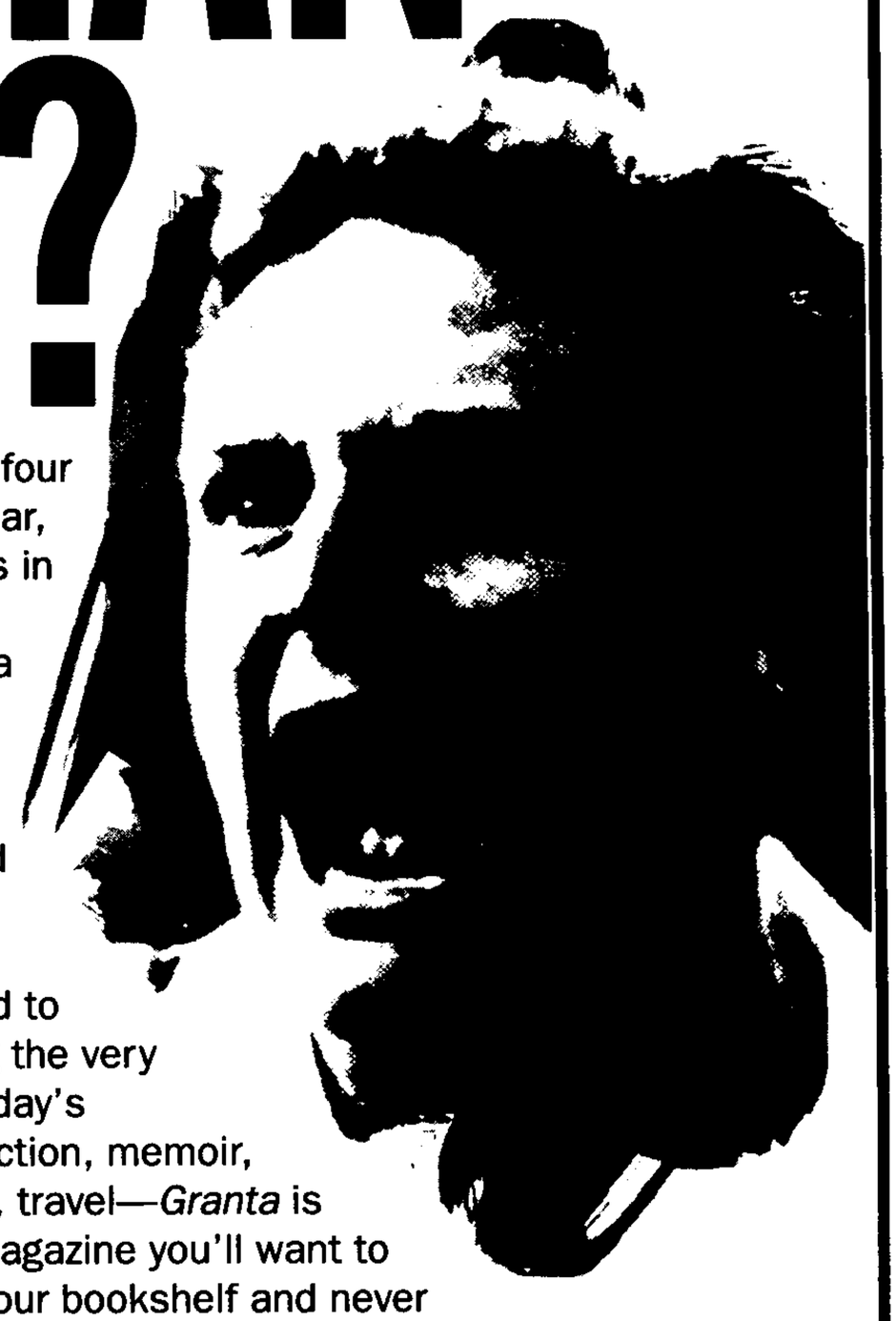

Or a genius?

Idiot or genius, he's at the heart of our culture. Which is why *Granta*, a literary magazine, asked Ian Hamilton, a literary biographer (his subjects include J.D. Salinger and Robert Lowell), football supporter and Gazza fan to write an enthusiast's account of Paul Gascoigne: of a player's life *and* of the fan's obsession, of a sports celebrity *and* of our apparent need to have one. (Ian Hamilton thinks Gazza's a genius, by the way, even if others have dismissed him as daft as a brush.)

In the new issue of *Granta* you'll also find Jonathan Raban on the flooded Mississippi, fiction from Ethan Canin (Salinger's heir apparent?), Nick Hornby on teenage sex (there had to be something better than Arsenal) and Timothy Garton Ash on his interview with Honecker in jail.

This issue is yours FREE with a one year subscription to *Granta*, price only £19.95—50% off the bookshop price.

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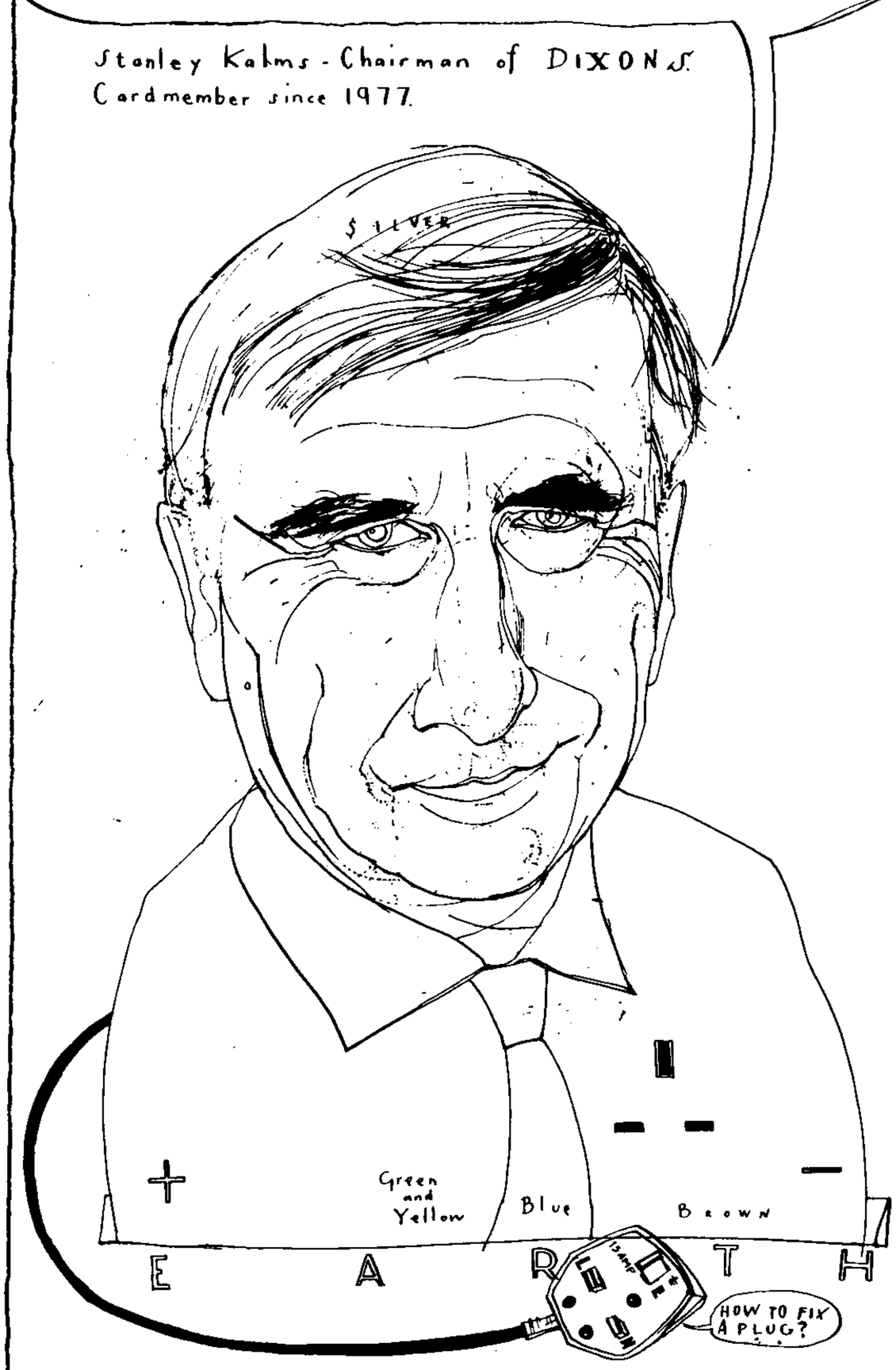

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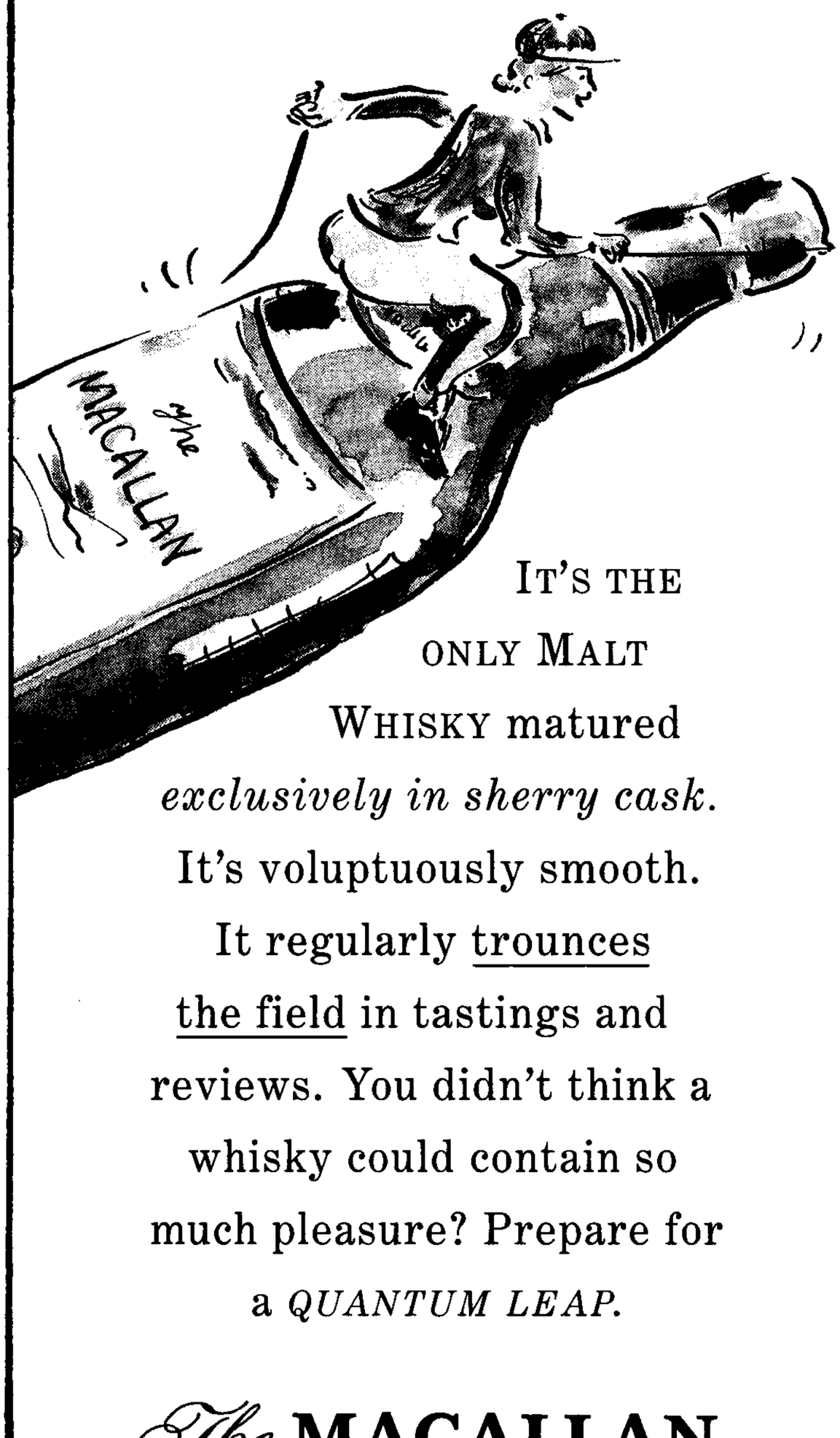

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The **MACALLAN.**
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Gnome

THERE are times when one begins to despair of British Justice. The sentencing of Roger Levitt to 180 hours community service for fraud marks a new low point in the judicial treatment of white collar crime.

What on earth did Mr Justice Laws think he was doing when he came up with this sentence in Southwark Crown Court last week? What sort of signal did he think he was giving to the business community and indeed the country as a whole?

Levitt, let us remember, had admitted trading fraudulently and lying to the relevant regulatory bodies over a sum of £20 million. His business collapsed, leaving £34 million in debts.

180 hours community service? Has the world gone mad?

Levitt should have got an hour and a half maximum. The result is a disgrace.

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COLOUR SECTION

Have you been in Hallo? See page 7

THE impression that the Major government is daily disintegrating increases. At two big departments of state the disillusionment is affecting the loyalty of the civil service, from the bottom, where civil servants are increasingly treated like trash, to the top, where some of the most loyal mandarins are throwing in the towel.

The departure of Sir Geoffrey Holland as permanent secretary at the Department of Education has been specially shocking. Holland left without a word of explanation, and made no effort to deny his contempt for the Secretary of State, John Patten.

Holland is no trendy radical. He has been in the civil service since 1961, rising rapidly through both Tory and Labour governments. In the 1980s he got on well with the Thatcherite Secretary of State, Lord Young. He was put in charge of Young's ambitious reforms of training, and eventually became permanent secretary at the Department of Employment in 1988.

His move to Education earlier this year was seen as a promotion. Holland didn't think much of the Government's main education policies. He thought "opting out" was nonsense and he favoured the eventual abolition of 'A' levels. But he was quite prepared, as a loyal civil servant of 30 years experience, to carry out those policies. What he found intolerable was Patten's personal arrogance, his changes of mood and policy and his infatuation with personal publicity.

Holland advised strongly against the clash with the teachers over testing, and felt he had won a minor victory when Sir Ron Dearing was put in charge of the new testing and curriculum council in place of the Thatcherite fanatics favoured by Patten and his predecessors. But Patten's suspicious treatment of Dearing and his insistence on continuing with a tests policy that was doomed to disaster finally persuaded Sir Geoffrey to throw in the towel and retire to the West Country.

Another man considering a similar route to sanity is Sir Clive Whitmore, permanent secretary at the Home Office. Whitmore is more right-wing even than Holland. He was Thatcher's principal private secretary in her first three years of office, and was permanent under-secretary at the Ministry of Defence during the Westland crisis, when he loyally backed Thatcher against Heseltine. He has been a Conservative under-secretary at the Home Office since he went there in 1988, but he is disgusted by Michael Howard's "soundbite" approach to policy, especially to prison reform and criminal justice.

Patten, Howard and the others laugh off revolts of this kind on the grounds that they are the elected ministers and civil servants should do what they are told. The ministers' arrogance is likely to lead to more disaffection, and, hopefully, to many more leaks (the *Eye*'s address is 6 Carlisle St. London W1).

THE REVELATIONS over the Government's contacts with the IRA cannot be understood without appreciating the 20 year vendetta between MI5 and MI6.

The services have been at loggerheads since the mid-1970s, when MI5 effectively replaced MI6 as the main intelligence unit in Northern Ireland. The feud between the two was based on two completely different political perspectives.

MI6, which was in Ireland chiefly because the South of Ireland (Eire) was a foreign country, took a detached view of the conflict in the North. They favoured an even-handed attitude which looked forward to an eventual settlement. MI5 adopted a much more partisan policy, siding with the "Loyalists".

This dispute has continued ever since. By and large, British military intelligence has sided with MI5. Both co-operated to sabotage the power-sharing government of 1974 with the Ulster Workers Council strike (masterminded by a British intelligence agent), the bombing of Dublin with weapons put together with the help of military intelligence and, more recently, the negotiations between British intelligence agent Brian Nelson and the South African company Armscor for the shipping of arms to the Loyalists.

As Northern Ireland became more and more expensive, both in terms of money and lives, the conditions for a settlement improved, and MI6 started to counter-attack. The apparently conciliatory approach of the IRA culminated in the Hume-Adams initiative, in which the IRA agree to lay down their arms and accept the government of Northern Ireland provided some part of that government can be reached by representatives of Nationalist/Republican politicians.

These historic concessions won some response from the British government. They led to the banning of the Protestant military organisation, the UDA, and some very limited contacts between the IRA and suitably distant, non-ministerial representatives of the British government.

The old guard in MI5, by now indistinguishable from the Loyalist ultras, regarded all this as a surrender to the forces of evil. The breaking point came on 24 November, when a huge consignment of arms from Poland, ordered and paid for by the Ulster Volunteer Force, was seized by MI6 at Teesport.

Using their Orange contacts, MI5 leaked the "aide memoire" which proved the contacts between the British government and the IRA. At once "sources" in the Northern Ireland Office also leaked the news (published in most British papers on November 29) that the two "unauthorised" contacts had been made by MI6. Thus MI6 emerged from a week's furious leaking as the villains.

THE theoretical failure rate for the power supply in the London Tube was once in 1,100-3,650 years for the main system and somewhere near to infinity for a failure of the main system and the back-up at the same time. Yet it happened.

Nuclear safety is calculated in a similar way. The computers which will control Sizewell B nuclear power station can be relied upon to fail only once for every 1,000 times they are needed for a safe shutdown, according to Nuclear Electric (see *Eye* 830). And when that happens, there will be a back-up system waiting to take over.

Tell that to the travellers who were stuck in the Tube.

"Peace on earth, good will to all men – but if you tell anyone I'll deny it"

Street of Shame

WHILE David "Rommel" Montgomery has been celebrating the first anniversary of his arrival as chief executive of Mirror Group Newspapers, many of the galley-slaves who toil under his lash wonder what on earth there is to celebrate.

Rommel's brief was to revive the company's fortunes and morale after the long night of the Maxwell era. The latest ABC circulation figures show that in the year since his appointment the sales of all three titles have taken a nose-dive: the *Daily Mirror* is down by 180,367, the *People* by 109,857, the *Sunday Mirror* by 74,178. Next month's figures are certain to be even worse: in the week after publication of the pictures of Princess Di in her leotard, according to sources at MGN, the *Daily Mirror*'s circulation fell by 112,000 while the *Sunday Mirror*'s plummeted by 235,000.

To add to the gloom, the cash-starved group is also running up huge libel bills. As well as having to pay £350,000 in damages (plus costs) to Elton John, the *Sunday Mirror* recently shelled out £400,000 in a hitherto undisclosed settlement with Lisa-Marie Presley, daughter of the late — or still alive, according to taste — Elvis of that ilk.

Rommel may shrug off all these grim tidings by saying that the only figure which matters is MGN's share price. But even this is now heading due south, dropping from 186p in September to 151p last week. The biggest shareholder in the Mirror Group, Mercury Asset Management, has made a loss of £13 million on its investment in the past three months.

In his year at the top, Rommel has shown that he knows of only one way to get the share price up again — by sacking people. And so last Friday he abruptly got rid of a Mirror Group lawyer, David Philp, holding him responsible for the recent series of libel disasters. Whether the City will be impressed by this remains to be seen. Even the dunderheads of the Square Mile may realise that the *Mirror* did not lose to Elton John because of any failure by Philp, but because it printed a story that was untrue.

IPC likes to boast that, as Europe's largest publisher of consumer magazines, it takes its responsibilities seriously. A flavour of the dignity and decorum which it brings to the role can be gained from this recent IPC press release:

"An exclusive story and pictures on the death of Hollywood heart-throb River Phoenix are expected to boost sales of the 23 November issue of the *National Enquirer*.

"The pictures include one of the young film star lying in his coffin, following his death in mysterious circumstances. The picture was sold to the *News of the World,* which published it last weekend citing *National Enquirer* as the source.

"Distributors IPC Marketforce Independent Publishers Group have informed all wholesalers advising them of the issue's content so that they and their retail customers can increase orders..."

Tasteful, or what?

THERE were unpleasant scenes at the recent "think-tank" meeting of *Sun* hacks in Wimbledon. Feature writer Amanda Cable ridiculed the paper's sports pages, provoking sports editor Paul Ridley to be rude about her own contributions.

When Stuart "The Human Sponge" Higgins chivalrously came to her defence, Ridley floored him with a punch. *Sun* editor Kelvin McKenzie tried to calm Ridley down, only to be asked, "You want some too? You can have it."

Kelvin retreated from the fray, saying: "If *Private Eye* hear about this, you'll have to go and see Murdoch yourselves."

LAST weekend's *Sunday Times* carried a long and extremely flattering interview with Melvyn Bragg by Style-section hack Tim Willis.

It began with an account of the recent "Bad Sex Awards" at *Literary Review* at which, according to Willis, Barg had been "harangued" by diminutive Australian novelist Kathy Lette but had masterfully ordered her to "belt up". ("Who can blame him?" Willis asked rhetorically.)

The story had only one slight defect: it was pure fantasy. La Lette did not attend the *Literary Review* bash; at the time of her alleged spat with Barg, she was in fact at the opera.

Libel damages for inventing stories about people's behaviour at parties they did not attend currently run at £350,000 (Elton John vs. the *Mirror*). But it is thought that Ms Lette will let Barg and Willis off with a caution this time.

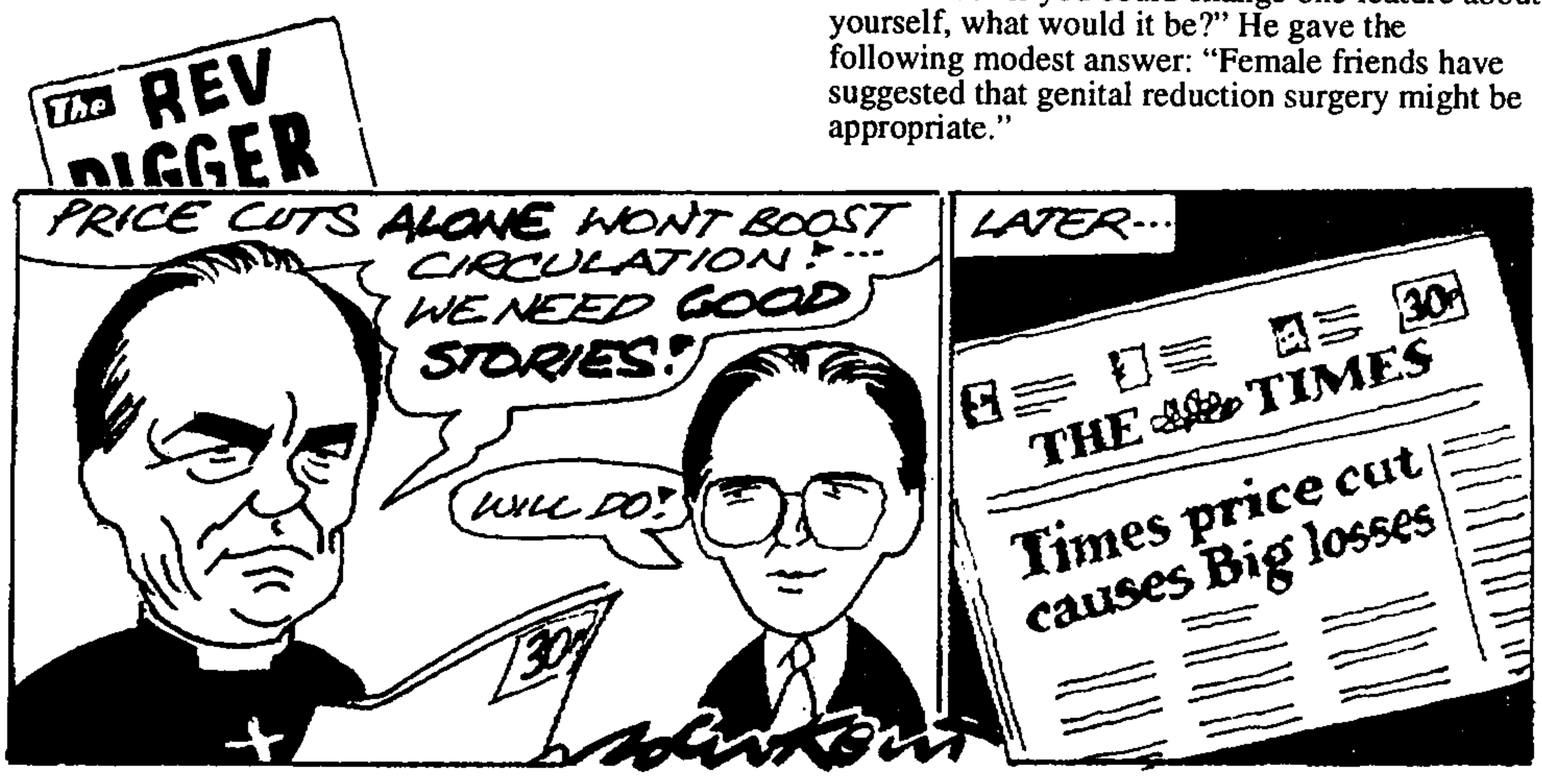
ON THE morning after Jill Tweedie's death last month, *Grauniad* editor Peter Preston wrote a touching tribute to his former colleague. In it, he admiringly recalled how she had once lobbed a milk-bottle through the window of a restaurant which had served her a bad meal. "Jill was a star," he concluded. "It would be nice to find a suitable window and milk bottle to remember her by."

What he neglected to mention was that Tweedie's treatment by the paper had not always been so generous. In 1990 she was abruptly sacked, after 22 years as a popular *Guardian* columnist, because she was thought to be "old hat". And who was the editor who approved her dismissal? Peter Preston.

It was this callous treatment which prompted one of her friends to take up the suggestion at the end of Preston's article. Wandering home on the day of Tweedie's funeral, after an appropriately boozy wake, one mourner lobbed an "in memoriam" bottle through the plate-glass front of the *Guardian* offices.

SIMON WINCHESTER is the former *Sunday Times* and *Grauniad* hack who went East and settled in the crown colony of Hong Kong. A questionnaire feature in the *Sunday Morning Post Magazine* explains that he is living in New York, "completing a book on the nature of travel" and intends returning to Honkers next spring.

In the course of the questionnaire, Winchester was asked: "If you could change one feature about yourself, what would it be?" He gave the following modest answer: "Female friends have suggested that genital reduction surgery might be appropriate."



"Hallo there — Max Clifford!"

LORD Stevens of Ludgate, the Napoleonic chairman of Express Newspapers, was none too amused at his recent AGM when a young woman stood up and complained about the lack of investment in the *Sunday Express*. He was even less amused when he discovered that his questioner, Lucy Reese, was in fact a hackette from the *Sunday Express*'s City pages.

An inquiry was ordered to find out who had "put her up" to embarrass his lordship. The finger of suspicion soon pointed to Eve Pollard's right-hand man Charles "Experienced" Golding, the paper's bow-tied deputy editor.

Reese was immediately informed that she was to be transferred to a job where she would have no contact with Golding, lest she might have to give evidence against him in due course. For one wretched day she was forced to work on the *Daily Star*, before being moved to a far flung section of the *Sunday Express* which was thought to be safely distant from Golding's desk.

Meanwhile, Golding disappeared from the office for a week, apparently with a "migraine". It is as nothing to the headache he can expect when he next encounters Lord Stevens.

TORYGRAPH mischief-makers at Canary Wharf have added up the taxi bills charged as expenses by both Frank Johnson and his protege Petronella "Petsy" Wyatt during the past year.

Frank is too grand to take the Docklands Light Railway and Petsy too fragile a bloom. All told, the bills came to £19,000.

AFTER THE unpleasant incident in August when *Sunday Mirror* assistant editor Brendan "Damien" Parsons dragged the paper's art editor across a room by her long blonde hair (*Eye* 827), no disciplinary action was taken, natch. But the unfortunate victim, Anne Rowe, decided enough was enough, and succeeded in obtaining a transfer to the *Daily Mirror*. She was quickly followed by a sub-editor, Suzanne Kenny, whose life was also being made a misery by the odious Damien.

Both women were therefore dismayed when Parsons was appointed Night Editor of the *Daily Peeping Tom* in November. Parsons' opportunities for persecuting hackettes may be limited, however, for he has a clause in his contract stipulating that he need not work any later than nine in the evening. This is an unusual arrangement for a tabloid night editor, to say the least (they usually work until the small hours of the morning), but then Parsons is a great favourite of MGN chief executive David "No Popes or partiality here" Montgomery. Unkind *Mirror* hacks have dubbed Damien "the afternoon editor".

Sharon Feinstein

AN ARTICLE published in our issue for 13 August 1993 suggested that freelance journalist Sharon Feinstein had behaved in an improper and unprofessional manner when working for the *News of the World*. We now unreservedly accept that the suggestion is totally without foundation or substance. We apologise to Sharon Feinstein for the embarrassment which she has been caused by the publication of our article.

HALLO!

The new heartwarming column

HALLO! A SPLENDID dinner for the Turner Awards was made even more enjoyable by a lively speech from Lord Palumbo, the handsome millionaire who does so much good work for the Arts Council.

Lord Palumbo wittily castigated the "dunces" who criticise art without knowing anything about it. He then went on to talk about Vincent van Gogh's brother, whom he referred to as "Leo".

Some of the audience may not have realised quite what a historic moment this was. Until now, art historians have believed that van Gogh's brother was called Theo. Clearly, Lord Palumbo's scholarly researches have shown otherwise. It is typical of the modesty of the man that he did not call attention to his exciting discovery!

HALLO! LOVELY Jeffrey Archer, the brilliant novelist and charity organiser, came off rather well in a recent encounter with Kitty Kelley, the poisonous purveyor of tittle-tattle about those who actually achieve something worthwhile in their lives.

Lord Archer politely told her that he did not want to speak with her because "you live off my friends". Kitty was a little surprised at this and asked which of his friends he had in mind. "Frank Sinatra", he replied. When she told Lord Archer that during her research for her beastly biography of the great crooner she had never come across Lord Archer's name, he wisely put an end to this unpleasant exchange by observing: "Anyway, I don't fancy blondes."

HALLO! THE SEASON of goodwill is upon us and no doubt everyone is looking forward to those Christmas parties at which they will bump into old friends.

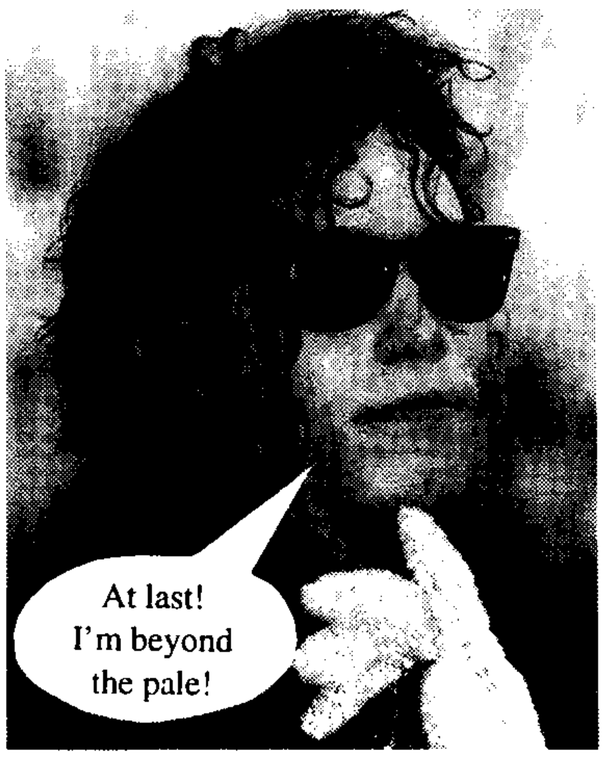
Last year the brilliant former financier Roger Levitt and the inspiring Barbara Mills, Director of Public Prosecutions, stood in the same room at the agreeable Christmas party of Levitt's solicitor Ian Burton, of Burton Copeland! Naturally, they were unable to speak with one another because of the horrible business of Roger's misunderstanding with the Serious Fraud Office.

This year, things should be easier for them both. Now that the air has cleared, these marvellous servants of the community can come together in peace over a glass of mulled wine.

HALLO! PRINCESS Diana certainly "lit up" Bond Street when she switched on the Christmas lights there. The crowds of shoppers and tourists were delighted to see the princess smiling throughout the event, bravely putting her recent distress behind her.

It has not been an easy year for Diana. On a recent foreign trip she was deeply affected by the sight of starving and dying children, and vowed that, after seeing the conditions they had to live in, she would "never complain about anything ever again."

That, of course, was before she learned that the privacy of her gymnasium had been invaded by a hidden camera. She quite rightly felt that, in the light of this outrage, even the poor street-children of Calcutta would not wish to keep her to her promise.



HALLO! TELEVISION viewers were enthralled by the appearance on their screens last week of the doughty Baroness Park of Monmouth, the so-called "Queen of Spies", who told us about the marvellous work done over the years by her old employers, the Secret Intelligence Service.

Daphne Park, as she once was, says that in spite of the BBC's reputation as a left-wing hotbed she has always found it most responsible. When her colleagues at MI6 asked the Corporation if it would permit her to broadcast an appeal on their behalf, expecting a few minutes on *The Week's Good Cause*, they were amazed and delighted when Mr John Birt told them that she could have a specially-extended edition of *Panorama* instead.

Lady Park is no stranger to broadcasting, of course. As a BBC governor in the 1980s, she successfully persuaded her fellow-governors to ban a film about something called "Zircon" which would apparently have caused needless distress to a number of public servants. She was given a peerage shortly afterwards, an honour of which she is justifiably proud.

HALLO! *THAT flamboyant left-wing tycoon Owen Oyston, onetime estate agent, onetime owner of the prestigious News on Sunday, onetime chairman of Miss World, has been telling us of his latest exciting venture.*

Mr Oyston wants to build a £150 million "International Colosseum" in his home town of Blackpool, complete with a football stadium, swimming pool, health club, bars and restaurants and a 200-bedroom hotel.

Another talented recruit is David Burnside, the former British Airways public relations supremo. He departed from the airline earlier this year after revelations of a "dirty tricks" campaign against Richard Branson, but he has put those unhappy memories behind him now and is thrilled to be working with Mr Oyston.

To help him raise the £44 million he needs for the first phase of the project, Owen Oyston also has access to the financial expertise of Michael Stoney, whom he has installed at Oyston Mill in nearby Preston. Mr Stoney once worked for a "socialist millionaire" even more famous than Mr Oyston, since he was formerly the finance director of Mirror Group Newspapers. Unfortunately his career with Robert Maxwell has left him on bail facing charges of falsifying documents and conspiring to defraud the Mirror Group of £50 million, which must be a cause of some sadness to him.

HALLO! LYNN BARBER, the delightful columnist, has revealed to us that the charming and much-misunderstood *You've Been Framed* presenter Jeremy Beadle has a fascinating hobby. He likes to collect celebrity autopsy reports.

The Marquesa

LEGAL NEWS

THE unprofessional war of words between Princess Di's lawyer, Anthony Julius, and Mark Stephens, solicitor for Rex Features, the agency handling the leotard shots, has reached new depths of indignity.

After Stephens went on LBC Radio to say that the Princess was "on very thin ice legally" (*Eye* 833), Julius launched a thinly-veiled attack in an interview with *Solicitors Journal*: "A lot of lawyers have been giving very authoritative points of view on the basis of absolutely no understanding of the facts of the case. It doesn't matter to me, but I find all the self-advertising a little embarrassing to witness."

Stephens promptly telephoned the *SJ* hack in question with a further broadside against Julius: "If you wanted to extend a two-day story by six months, nine months, how would you do it? You'd issue a writ. That seems to me to be particularly inept."

The fact that the writ was issued by Mischon de Reya is further evidence of the rift between Di, who has previously consulted Lord Mishcon on "personal matters", and Buck House. Farrar & Co, solicitors by appointment to HMQ, advised against suing.

PUBLISHERS wary of letting confidential book proposals or manuscripts fall into the hands of unscrupulous newspapers might be interested to learn that the high-minded *Sunday Times*, which complained about the *Daily Mirror*'s pirating of words taken from the Thatcher memoirs, accepts that it was guilty of a breach of confidentiality over *Tornado Down*, the ghosted book by RAF flight lieutenants A.J. Nichol and John Peters, published last year by Michael Joseph.

Prior to publication, the *Sunday Times* (while Ivan Fallon was deputising for Andrew "Brillo-Pad" Neill) acquired a copy of the book's synopsis and proceeded to run a story based on extended paraphrase.

Neill has recently written to Flight Lt. Nichol as follows: "I accept no parallel between what the *Mirror* did to us and our story based on your synopsis. We did not steal your book. We did not pay anybody to steal it. Nor did we run over four days, using thousands of words, extracts from it. The *Mirror* did all that, and more."

Neill defends his paper on the basis that the story "whetted the appetites of readers" to such an extent that *Tornado Down* later became a No.1 bestseller and that therefore it cannot have suffered very much damage at all. "I wish that was all the damage we had suffered from the *Mirror*," he whinges. Yet, surely, on the same basis the readers of the *Sunday Times* had their appetites whetted by the *Mirror* revelations, while the *Sunday Times* had its "good" name associated with another No.1 bestseller.

Nevertheless, the *Sunday Times* lawyers believed that the authors of *Tornado Down* had grounds for a breach of confidentiality claim — "always a murky ground (as the serialiser of *Spycatcher* I know!)", wrote Neill — and paid them £7,350.

The Flog It Prince

ONE aspect of the amazing appointment of raving rightist David Hart as adviser to Defence Secretary Malcolm Rifkind has not been widely publicised: Hart's passionate support for the Serbian empire.

In the *Spectator* last January Hart urged that the British government should team up with the Serbs, who had the biggest army and could serve as a bulwark against Islamic fundamentalism. Rifkind is known to be a dove about committing British troops to the area, and Hart hopes to reinforce this approach.

Rifkind is expected to be a regular guest at Hart's sumptuous week-ends at his Suffolk mansion, where important matters of state have been decided ever since Hart ran the working miners committee during the miners' strike — from a suite at Claridges.

JOHN Major's "back to basics" rallying cry should be well received by his parliamentary allies in the Official Unionist Party — although the cynical might suggest that the Unionists are likely to interpret 'forties values' as being those of the 1840s.

Take, for example, the behaviour of the Reverend Martin Smyth, MP for Belfast South.

Whilst escorting a party of Orangemen on a tour of the Palace of Westminster, the Rev Smyth encountered a member of the opposite sex whom he considered a loose woman. Smyth stopped his party in its tracks and pointed an accusing finger in the direction of the unfortunate female MP. "There goes a Jezebel!" he declared in deepest Bible-bashing Belfast accent.

THE DEVOTION to parliamentary democracy of the Thatcherite Minister of State for Employment, Michael Forsyth, was handsomely demonstrated by new mining safety regulations tabled by Forsyth in the teeth of opposition of almost everyone who works in the industry.

The regulations were published on 6 August, after the House of Commons had gone off on holiday. They came into force on 1 October... long before MPs came back from their hols.

HARRIET Harman, Labour's No. 2 spokeswoman on the Treasury, and Patricia Hewitt, the woman who helped Neil Kinnock to two election defeats, were shocked when they discovered that MI5 had been tapping their phone calls when they both worked in their radical days for the National Council for Civil Liberties (now Liberty).

They failed in the English courts to get an order that the files be destroyed so, both being keen Europeans (right up to the full Maastricht), they took their case to the European Commission for Human Rights. This, they cried, would demonstrate how much we needed a written constitution like the Continental countries, where judges could safeguard our liberties.

Alas for their good intentions. The Europeans have decided that there is no need for them to interfere and the files showing the youthful ideals once pursued by two of Labour's right-wing leaders will now remain on the record for ever more. And from Harman/Hewitt not a sound has been heard — not even a round-robin letter to the *Grauniad*, denouncing Europe's perfidy.

THE defeat of Peter Hain as secretary of the Tribune group was a victory for subservience and censorship. His fellow Labour MPs had disliked his draft for a pamphlet and had cut out most of the non-conformist thoughts about the economy (as revealed in the *Eye*, along with the expurgated passages, on 27 August). So he wrote another pamphlet, this time under the umbrella of *Tribune* magazine, putting back the disobliging sentiments (see *Eye* 829).

This was too much for the Brown-Blair establishment and they supported a rival candidate, Janet Anderson, who, in spite of the advantage of being a woman in the present political climate, won by only three votes (37-34). Even that was possible only because the hard Left has deserted the Tribune group to form the Campaign group, and leading right-wingers, including Brown, Blair and Mandelson, have become Bevanites and joined the Tribune group (to muffle it). The three of them voted for Janet Anderson.

Janet Anderson was once a full-time Labour Party organiser and had recently been PPS to the deputy leader, Margaret Beckett, but claims that she was not acting for the leadership. Hmm.

SIR Ivan Lawrence QC, right-wing chairman of the Home Affairs Select Committee, has added his voice to the rising clamour of doubt about recent miscarriages of justice.

In a Commons debate on 23 November he said: "During the past 14 years there has been an undermining of the criminal justice system as a whole, particularly with the revelations of miscarriages of justice, in which legally innocent people have been convicted of many serious crimes."

Chris Mullin, who wrote a book about the innocence of the Birmingham Six, intervened:

"Would the Hon. Gentleman explain to the House what he means by 'legally innocent'?"

Dame Elaine Kellet-Bowman, Tory MP for Lancaster, where the Birmingham Six were first tried and wrongly found guilty, shouted: "We all know."

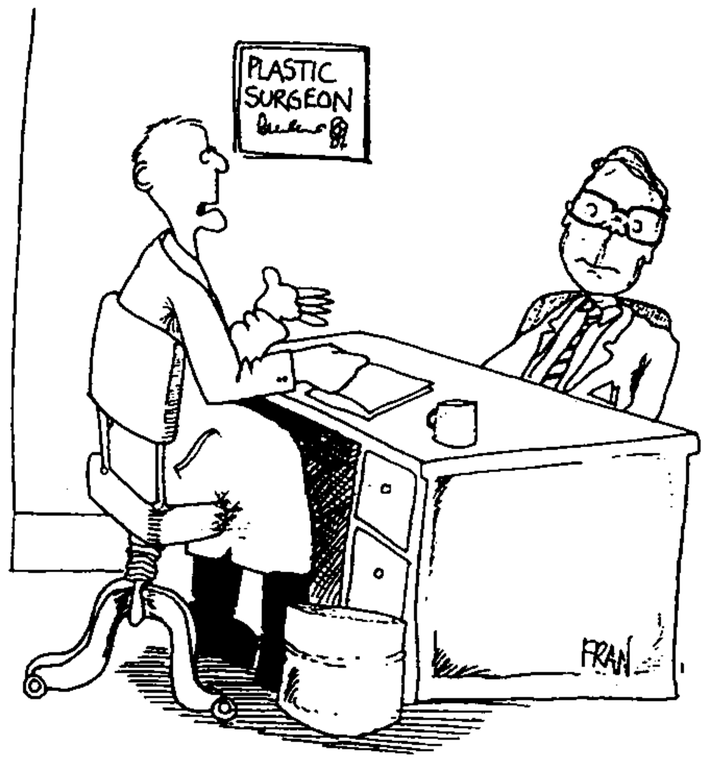
To which Sir Ivan added: "I am grateful to my Hon. Friend, but I would rather not explain it. We all know precisely what I mean."

MPs had no idea what he meant. They racked their brains for an example of someone "legally innocent" who had been convicted of a serious crime. The best example anyone who could come up with was that of Russell Bishop. Bishop was arrested for the horrific Babes in the Woods murders in Sussex in 1986. He was acquitted after a trial in 1987. Three years later he was arrested again for a dreadful attack on a seven-year-old girl in Brighton. Unlike the babes in the wood, the girl survived, gave a good description of her assailant, and also told police she had scratched the inside of the car boot she had been locked in. Scratches of the type she described were found in Bishop's car and he was arrested, convicted and sent to prison. More than one commentator referred to the similarity of the two attacks.

In the week of Sir Ivan's outburst, MPs were trying to recall the name of the brilliant barrister whose command of the evidence and skilful advocacy secured the acquittal of Russell Bishop at the first trial.

The *Eye* can help: Sir Ivan Lawrence QC.

Backbiter'



"All finished, Mr Jackson — nobody will take any notice of you now"

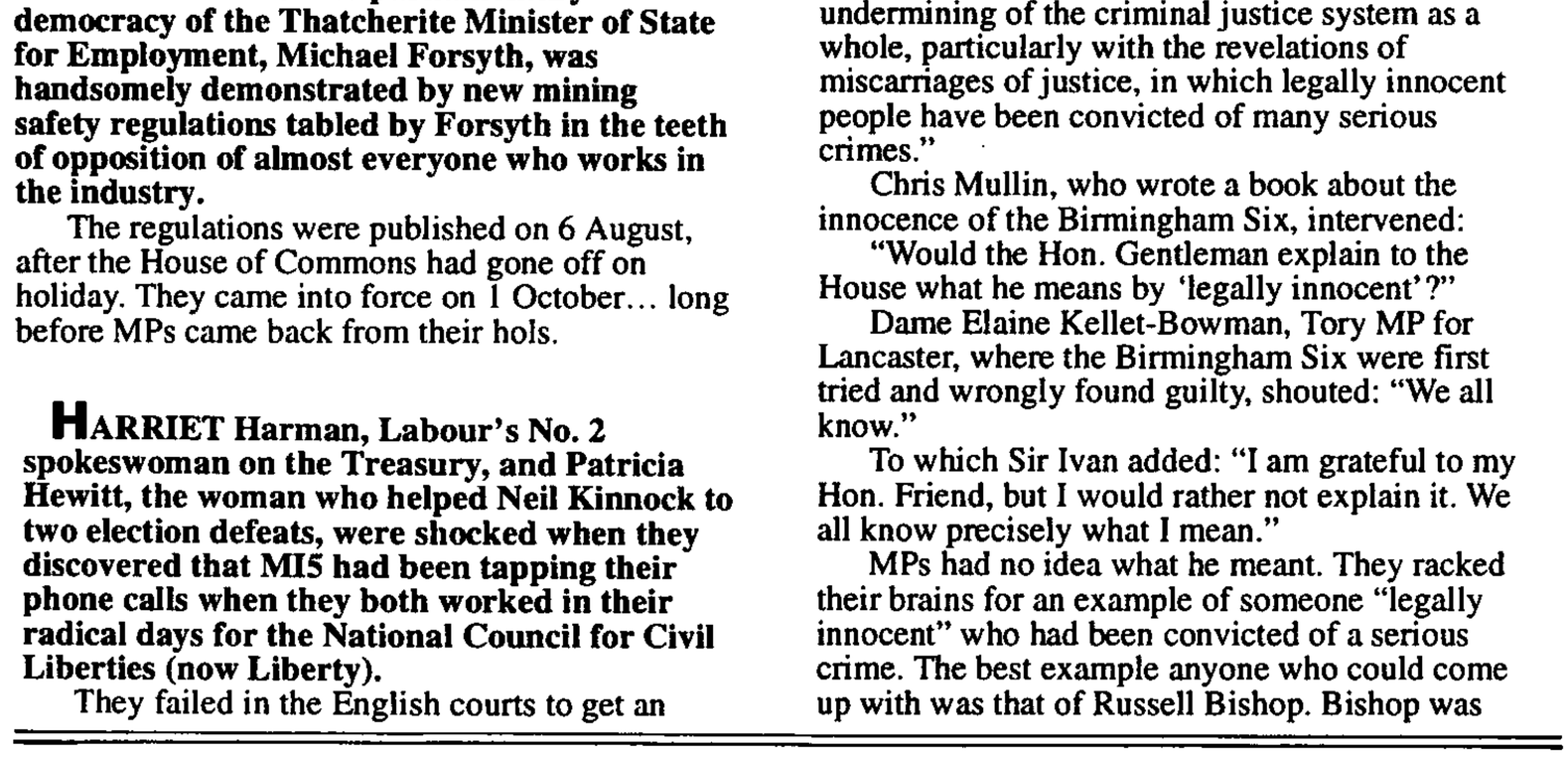
THE ROAD LOBBY (5)

IN URBAN areas the government has poured billions into new roads which simply take more and more cars more quickly into ever more congested city streets.

About two-thirds of those cars make journeys of less than five miles, and most are occupied by only one person. But practically no public money is made available for public transport systems which could easily be made convenient and attractive enough to lessen the burden imposed on our towns by excessive car traffic.

Shoppers might therefore be interested to learn that the British Road Federation's membership list (at 31 December 1992) includes: Boots the Chemists Ltd; HP Bulmer Ltd; John Menzies (GB) Ltd; 3M United Kingdom plc; Tate and Lyle plc; and Weetabix Ltd.

JOBS FOR THE BOYOS


JOHN KENT PRESENTS
JOHN MAJOR'S SENSATIONAL BIG TOP
CIRCUS & MENAGERIE
THE VANISHING TRICK!
ONLY ONE COUNTY COUNCIL IN ENGLAND IS UNDER TORY CONTROL!
WHAT SHALL WE DO?
LET'S ABOLISH THEM!

GWYN JONES, who left his job as chairman of the Welsh Development Agency (WDA) just as the agency was being savaged by the public accounts committee (PAC) for its profligacy, has landed another nice little earner.

Jones has signed on at an undisclosed salary as a non-executive director of Drayton English & International Trust, a City firm specialising in investing in small UK-quoted companies. The firm is chaired by Sir Michael Richardson, chairman of merchant bankers Rothschild and stockbrokers Smith New Court — on whose board sits Lord (Peter) Walker.

When Walker was Welsh secretary, he appointed Jones to chair the ill-starred WDA. The former golden boyo got out earlier this year as the influential PAC criticised the outfit he was supposed to be running for shelling out £1.3 million in unauthorised redundo and £33,000 in petrol money to senior executives.

Despite calls for his removal, Jones remains a governor of the BBC.

NOOKS and CORNERS

IN *EYES* 786 and 791, I described the scandalous proposals to chop up E.W. Pugin's great Church of St Francis in Gorton, Manchester, and turn it into flats.

Despite the opposition of the Victorian Society and English Heritage (who had spent public money on restoring it), the dear old department of the environment gave Zodeco Homes a grant of £800,000 towards wrecking a listed building cynically abandoned by its owners, the Franciscans.

Now I learn that Mr Charles Zodeh has failed to begin work, that "travellers" have set up camp in the grounds of the church and that "vandals" are busy removing lead and tiles from the roof. The local authority now plans to secure the site and to undertake repairs — and to send Mr Zodeh the bill. Good luck to them: but perhaps they should go further. This is a scheme that should never have been permitted.

AS THE wilful damage has already been done, I thought I would write no more about poor St Joseph's, Sheringham** (Eyes 824, 826 & 830). **Now I learn that matters have gone from worse to intolerable.

Readers will recall that the parish priest, Canon McBride, planned to "reorder" this superb building to the designs of the deeply caring and sensitive architect, Mr Anthony Rossi of Norwich. My spies tell me that the executed work has gone further than the scheme approved by the RC diocese of East Anglia, for — among other things — the Gothic "scrolls" at the side of the splendid reredos (so characteristic of the early work of Giles Gilbert Scott) have not been replaced. The reason? Mgr McBride does not like them. A matter of opinion, perhaps, but that is scarcely the point.

English Heritage has now written to the good monsignor to express its concern. This will merely elicit a contemptuous response, but well might English Heritage be worried as it had advised the department of national heritage to reject the Victorian Society's request to the secretary of state that "ecclesiastical exemption" be lifted over St Joseph's. The reasons? That the alterations were "reversible" (how do you reverse chopping the ends off a marble altar?); that the architect involved was a good thing (he sits on lots of English Heritage committees); and that the scheme had been approved by the diocese's art and architecture committee.

So where does Mgr McBride's latest act of vandalism leave the diocese? And where, for that matter, does it leave his arrogant and ignorant architect?

THINKING of English Heritage, I have just been sent the handsome glossy *Annual Report and Accounts* for 1992/93. This, although it shows that good and necessary work continues to be carried out, fails to reflect the crisis and demoralisation within the organisation under the chairmanship of the egregious Jocelyn de Stevens, CVO. A great pity, therefore, that the chairman's remarks at the launch of the annual report on 9 November (to which the press was not invited) have not been widely reported. For they were extraordinary.

Evidently infuriated by criticism of his ill-advised "Forward Strategy (*Eyes passim*) — much of which has already been abandoned because impractical, the chairman of English Heritage launched into abuse of "the Fourth Estate of the Realm... which has been more recently reduced by some of its members to a heap of rubble, fit only for blind alley cats, peeping toms and self-confessed ratbags".

And he continued by suggesting to long-suffering Peter Brooke, the heritage secretary, "I humbly propose that, before it is too late, the Fourth Estate be declared a disaster area; that listed building consent be granted to allow the demolition of the erstwhile pillars of good journalism now in decay; that compulsory repairs and notices be issued on almost all the others, and that certain editors be 'ring fenced' to await your *displeasure*... I would dearly like to 'have a go' myself, if you were minded to allow me..." A joke? A mercy, perhaps, that this typewriter-throwing maniac is not home secretary.

But down to facts. De Stevens was proud to claim that "in spite of a reduction of grant-in-aid from the department, we have this year been able to concentrate millions of pounds, saved from administration and less important tasks, on the conservation of England's built heritage..." *Shome mishtake, shurely?*

The published report reveals that grant-in-aid has in fact risen from £90,179,000 in 1992 to £99,917,000 in 1993 and that operations costs have also risen from £56,812,000 to £60,434,000 and administrative expenses from £7,193,000 to £7,617,000. Another interesting figure is the £4,877,000 for "severance costs" in 1993 (it was zero in 1992), that is, the money paid to those sacked and those who could not bear to work in an organisation demoralised by its disastrous chairman.

Sometimes one is rather proud to be a ratbag.

'Piloti'

House, by Rachel Whiteread, at a junction in London E3, has attracted a stream of visitors and tourists...

The Turner jury, chaired by Nicholas Serota, director of the Tate Gallery, commended her work for "its combination of austere monumentality and immediacy of reference to the everyday world", "haunting quality" and "poetic strangeness."

The Times

When thinking about Mark [Boxer] one must immediately cast off the crabbed, the gingerly, the inhibited — the Leavisite, in a word. He was what Darwinians would call a genetic celebrity. He was prodigious; his looks, his life-glow, filled the room; he was almost embarrassingly handsome, but unremote. Once your embarrassment had been mastered, he was a pleasure to be near. When I dream about him I wake up still smelling the aroma of his presence.

MARTIN AMIS
The Collected and Recollected Marc

Meaningful Experience
A five-way test to determine if a personal experience is "Meaningful". Did you (1) do it yourself, (2) see the results of each step, (3) see the final results, (4) understand why you took action and (5) understand the objective? (Control/Problem Solving/Decision Making).

ARTHUR ANDERSEN
Model-Netics Management Memory Jogger

Pseuds Corner

To coincide with the publication of its December-January issue, published on 17 November, *The Modern Review* will be hosting a debate at the Oxford Union.

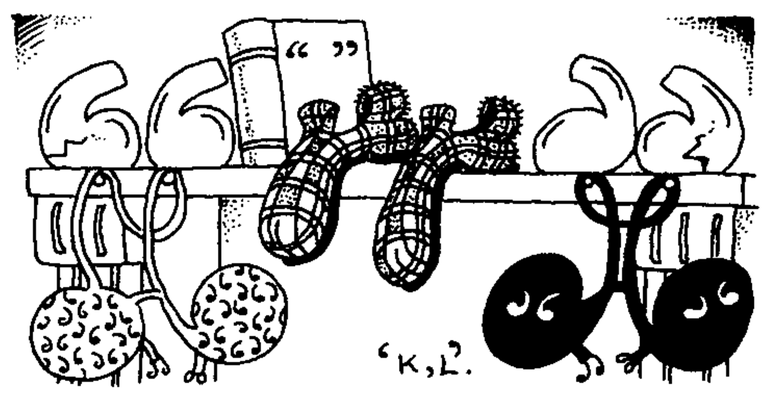
The debate will also be the occasion for the unveiling of a range of *Modern Review* products and accessories in a fashion show to be held at the Oxford Union on the same night. These will include an Ironic Bikini, with the bra cups being replaced by two single inverted commas, Freudian slippers, which will be phallus-shaped, and two porcelain double inverted commas to place at either end of your mantelpiece just to make it completely clear that what's in between them is ironic. The entire exercise is intended to be a satirical comment on the whole merchandising phenomenon.

Press Release

Dr Wolfgang Trull, a Viennese psychiatrist visiting London for a World Health Organisation conference, commented last week: "There is a transcendental edge to Status Quo's lyrics which puts the listener into an active trance associated with certain mantras."

He quoted lyrics from Rain: "I can't live without the rain that's falling on my head, rain that's falling, rain that's falling on my head..." "By listening to the Status Quo," he added, "we revert to something within the primitive psyche that crosses over the class system."

Observer



CONTRIBUTORS: J. James, E. Strobes, A. Griffiths, Anon, J. Elsom, H. Thomas.

£10 paid for entries

I particularly admired the lock of innocent blonde hair woven around real sow's intestines to create the ultimate pigtail. As in all Chadwick's best work, a fairytale seems to have been relocated in the abattoir. The Irish sculptor, Dorothy Cross, makes a similar point with a woman's corset made from real cow's udders.

WALDEMAR JANUSZCHAK
(on *Bad Girls at the ICA*)
Sunday Times

Church Notices

OASIS. Try our relaxing massage in private jacuzzi/TV suites. New staff. 39 Lochaber St, Roath, Cardiff.

Chepstow & Caldicot News

RUNNER BEANS

Contents: Minimum 80 seeds = approx ⅓ pint

666	LADY DI, Vigorous growing habit with excellent flavour and texture	97p

Seed catalogue

THE Peeing Tom pictures of Princess Diana have made a new crackdown on the press more likely, the Government warned last night.

Today

● CUTTING HUMOUR, *an 8-year collection of boobs and misprints from the press, illustrated by Robert Thompson. Only £4.99.*

TV EYE

—— ITV Franchises —— (Carlton and others)

A SECRET document has come into the hands of the TV Eye column which establishes that — despite consistent denials by the Government that it was listening to the forces of darkness in its rearrangement of British commercial television — high-level contacts with the Devil *were* maintained throughout that period.

If you don't believe the secret document, then just look at the latest piece of ITV legislation announced by the Government last week. The decision — to allow ITV companies to take over one other station, with a full review of cross-ownership rules intended for next year — brings to the logical if ludicrous conclusion the process of hypocrisy, hamfistedness and stooped obeisance to Rupert Murdoch which has marked the Thatcher/Major stewardship of British television.

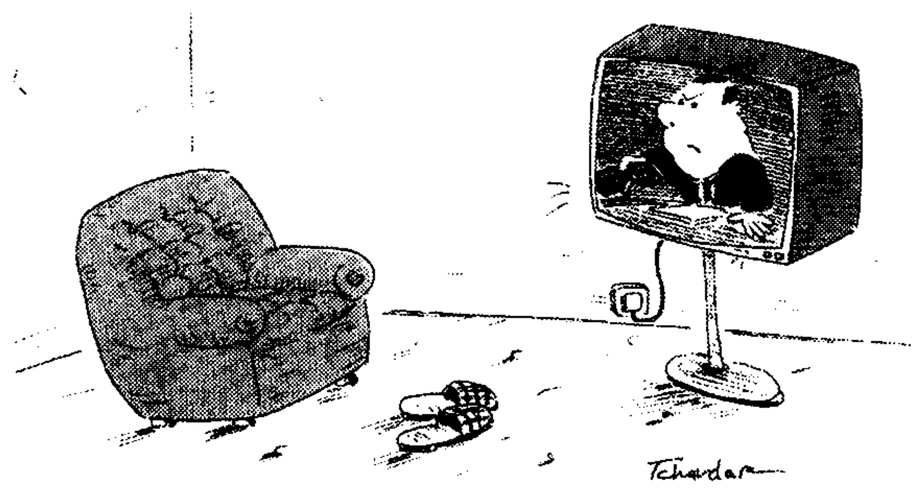
There always seems to be, for example, an element of accident in the Government's ITV legislation. In the most recent franchise round, it was the careless loss of TV-am, Lady Thatcher's favourite TV station. In last week's announcement, it was the apparently unintended protection accorded to the already-merged Yorkshire/Tyne-Tees company. This company — so beleaguered that it appealed to the ITC last week to be allowed to show more adverts and fewer programmes — was probably the keenest of all the franchise-holders to enter into a deal with another. Yet, being already a group with two franchises, the maximum collection currently allowed by government, it is seemingly unable to deal. Thus, the Government has managed to, as it were, ring-fence the heifer most on heat.

And, most importantly, the takeover rules remove the last pretence that programme quality — monitored by that watered-down IBA replacement, the ITC — is any longer a factor in the organisation of ITV. This point is richly proved by Carlton's agreed bid for Central, announced on Monday. Carlton, after a year on air, has perhaps the worst artistic record of any franchise-holder in history; neither locally nor to the network has it offered a show which might be regarded as upwardly innovative, although it has done important pioneering work in downward drift. Yet, by virtue of the depth of its pocket, Carlton is allowed to expand, bringing its influence to bear on Central, the most distinguished programme-maker among the younger ITV companies. Money talks, despite in Carlton's case its clear inability yet to walk in TV terms.

The prospect of the Midlands area franchise being run from London raises another remarkable aspect of the latest legislation. Historically, the ITV system has had two underlying principles: 1) That possible profits should be balanced against programme quality, and 2) That the overall structure should emphasise regional representation and employment. Having more or less abandoned the first principle, the Government now seems set to abandon the second. Despite entreaties, the Heritage department has failed to provide protection for either the Welsh or Scottish franchises, and has effectively promoted centralisation; or, in the case of Carlton's bid, de-Centralisation. This seems too large a policy change to occur through stealth.

The new takeover rules are also an illustration of the political consequences of cross-ownership, and deals between media barons and governments. TV tycoons, like Carlton's Michael Green and Central's Leslie Hill, have had to be kept sweet with the latest loosening of rules, because of their anger over the absurd classification of Rupert Murdoch's BSkyB as a non-domestic broadcaster, which allows him cross-media domination denied to the ITV barons.

The chances of Murdoch being required to divest are so remote — the Tories need his papers more than ever — that the only solution is loosening the ties on his rivals to quiet their cries. Last week's announcement was another step in this direction. Indeed, the consequences of the Tory-Murdoch pact of the past 10 years are ever more apparent in British politics. Some, for example, thought the Government's refusal to join in the post-Bolger verdict witch-hunt of television and cinema over violent movies demonstrated a new maturity. In fact, the Home Office was hamstrung by the party's obligations to Murdoch, whose Sky movie channels have regularly shown nasties that would stand no chance of being seen on the BBC or ITV.



So, by a continuation of the process of cock-up, obligation and half-digested ideology established in the last franchise round, the destruction of ITV goes on. It is a process of cheapening, for all except shareholders. Yet, even here, a warning may be sounded. Some in the City are warning that the money to be made from the ITV system might have been over-estimated by the barons now playing corporate games. The gods of the IBA, now turning in their graves, may yet have their quiet revenge.

'Square Eyes'

VIDEO NEWS

"A Grim Warning Of Nightmares To Come" was how the *Sun* splashed the thoughts of its TV critic and well-known defender of "Western values", Garry Bushell, after the jury had returned its guilty verdict in the James Bulger murder trial.

"Make no mistake," quoth he, "the old Britain, the old decency is dying." One of the reasons behind the brutal murder, says our Garry, was that "permissiveness is eating the fabric of our society. You want video nasties peddling stomach-churning filth? You got 'em." Our Gazza had heeded the words of Mr Justice Moorland, who identified "exposure to violent video films" as a possible causal factor in the killing.

The film *Child's Play 3* — a particularly vile offering described in the *Sun* story as a "grisly chiller" — had been rented by one of the boy's fathers "days before" the killing. According to the *Sun*, there were "chilling links between James murder and tape rented by killer's dad".

This was evidence enough for the *Sun* to issue a challenge to its readers on the Friday after the verdict: "For the sake of ALL our kids... BURN YOUR VIDEO NASTY." The paper launched a campaign to "get all other copies of *Child's Play* burned", adding — no doubt for fear of upsetting the Fire Brigade — "if you own one yourself, burn it safely."

On the same day, alas, several newspapers pointed out that *Child's Play 3* had itself been screened by Sky-TV (prop. R. Murdoch), a point that the *Sun* (prop. R. Murdoch) seemed rather more reluctant to enlarge upon.

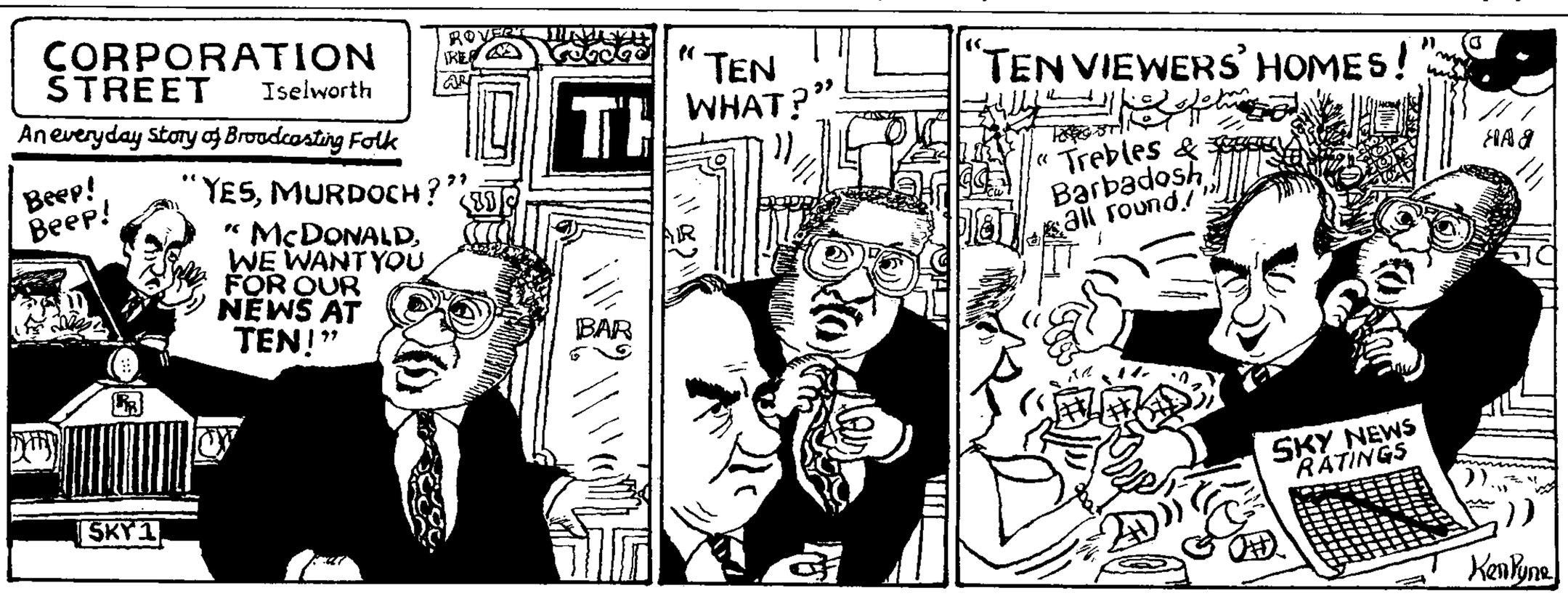
In fact, many of the other films rented by Child B's father and subsequently examined by Merseyside police were also screened for the "benefit" of Sky viewers this year.

One, called *Whispers*, was revealed by the *Sun* after the Bulger trial to feature a "necrophilia scene in a mortuary". This was shown on the Sky movie channel on 7 and 19 February. On this occasion, however, the *Sun*'s billing was less revealing: "An occultist tracks down a female writer. A cop is the only person who will believe her, and together they unravel the stalker's dark secret. Sun rating: Supernatural horror." Nothing there about the nature of the stalker's dark secret, or about the film being unsuitable for kiddies.

Child B's father had also rented *People Under The Stairs*. This too was shown by the Sky movie channel on 11 July — in this case with a "not for kids" warning. In case anyone missed it, however, it was reshown on 22 July. On this occasion, the paper described the "plot" thus: "A kid is stranded in a ramshackle old house belonging to a pair of child abusers who keep mutilated teenagers hidden in their basement... Sun rating: Chaotic horror yarn." No mention from the caring *Sun* on this occasion of its suitability for general viewing.

Another film rented by Child B's father was *Nightmare on the 13th Floor*. He needn't have bothered, because this too was shown on the Sky movie channel — on 7, 8 and 24 August. "A journalist discovers a secret 13th floor, inhabited by Satanists," said the *Sun*, adding: "Sun rating: Chilling horror yarn." Again no advice about its suitability for children.

Perhaps Garry Bushell and his employers will



extend the campaign to these examples of what Bushell called "stomach-churning filth" — but, then again, perhaps not. Bushell has not been so keen on censorship in the past. Writing in the *Sun* about the films screened on terrestrial channels back in March, he opined: "Showing films either side of the news is bad enough. But why censor those screened after the watershed? ... Thank heavens for Sky Movies."

Thank heavens, indeed.

MEDIA NEWS

THE glorious Birtian revolution is being carried out with zeal at the BBC's northern headquarters in Manchester.

An internal memo from John Dee, a senior bean counter at BBC North, to managers on the subject of "financial performance" discusses various cost-cutting measures.

They include "further reductions in headcount numbers, whether pensionable staff or contract", (Birtspeak for sackings); "Cease foyer and lift cleaning from 1st January"; "Remove all telephones from fire points, corridors, stairwells and car park"; and "Ensure Maintenance of Fire appliances is at the minimum frequency".

It concludes: "We need to think about how these measures are expressed to the staff and to colleagues. They are not panic measures, but the current position requires stringent control of expenditure. On occasions this emphasis will clash with the culture we have developed of quality, of doing things better, of being responsive to the needs of the customer.

"I'm afraid that for the next five months these aspirations will have to be scaled down. I would urge you to impress on your staff that how they say 'no' to a customer is just as important and requires just as much care and thought as always saying 'yes'. We must all be positive about this."

ARTS NEWS

WHILE Glasgow and Edinburgh wait to hear who will play host to the prestigious National Gallery of Scotland, Glasgow's arts boss Julian Spalding has issued a terse warning to staff: speak to the press and face instant dismissal.

Could Balding's megalomaniacal plea for silence perhaps have something to do with recent "disappearances" from the city's Kelvingrove Museum and Art Gallery?

A valuable trophy won by grocery squillionaire Sir Thomas Lipton recently vanished from a "security" cabinet, and a priceless Lowry painting was stolen while museum bosses hosted a charity ball. In another incident, a Derek Jarman painting and a Degas statue were attacked.

HOW THEY ARE RELATED

ON 14 November the *Sunday Times Magazine* carried a small item in its "Exposure" section about "whizkid" William Sieghart.

It gushed: "He plays Scrabble with Charles Saatchi, drives a 1976 Bristol and runs Forward, a contract publishing business with an annual turnover of over £5m" and is "Britain's biggest sponsor of poetry". The item carried the by-line of Tim Willis, the paper's former Style section editor.

FACT: Nowhere did it state that Tim Willis is the editor of *Charter News*, produced for the Citizen's Charter Unit by independent journalists, published by... er... Forward. Very independent.

HACKWATCH
Vanity Publishing

IT IS A truth universally acknowledged in Fleet Street that no newspaper column is complete without a photograph or drawing of the hack who writes it — a picture byline, as it's known in the trade.

If the hack is moderately good-looking (John Pilger, say, or Barbara Amiel) the task is simple. But when the *Sunday Times* signed up Peter McKay and Lynn Barber earlier this year it unwittingly landed itself with a problem that has bedevilled it ever since: how do you make mutton look like lamb?

Wapping's finest artists, photographers, airbrush merchants and scalpel-wielders have applied themselves to the challenge of concealing or enhancing the more raddled aspects of these highly-paid scribes, but to no avail. Here is the story so far:

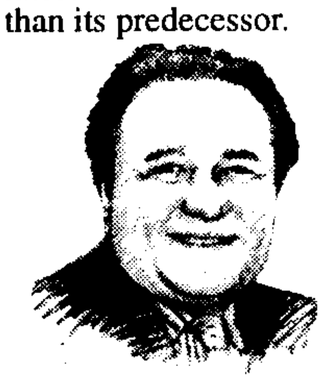
18 April: McHackey's column is launched, and immediately *Sunday Times* readers are thrown into confusion. For the photo of the new star pundit at the top of the page — a huge tub of guts, his eyes almost closed under the weight of blubber — is clearly not McKay at all, but the northern comedian Bernard Manning.

25 April: After just one outing, the Manning photo is ditched and caricaturist Richard Willson is commissioned to come up with something more flattering. Unfortunately Willson misreads his brief, delivering instead a drawing of Deng Xiaoping.

6 June: His own unfortunate picture byline does not prevent McHackey from commenting on the looks of others. Noting that Julie Christie looks "haggard" in recent photographs, he suggests that "she's what the French call *jolie laide*: she can look drop-dead gorgeous one moment and quite ropey the next."

13 June: Taking thehint, the *Sunset Times* commissions Richard Willson to have a second attempt at the McHackey countenance, in the hope of making him look drop-dead gorgeous. Out goes Deng Xiaoping; instead, the columnist is portrayed as a cross between Stephen Fry and Dame Janet Baker.

18 July: After a month of torment, McHackey can bear no more: he reassures his readers that the latest caricature of himself is "no more accurate" than its predecessor.



25 July: The *Sunset Times* takes the hint again, consigning the drag-queen picture to the dustbin and printing a new artist's impression which makes him look even fatter than his fellow *ST* scribe Godfrey Smith. Deciding that he has had enough, McHackey departs on holiday for the whole of August.

5 September: McKay returns to find that his column — and its picture byline — have been transferred from the Style section to the main bit of the paper, to make room for "a provocative new column" from Lynn Barber. Like McHackey, Barber is no oil-painting, and she is known to be touchy on the subject of her looks. Nevertheless, the *Sunset Times* boldly commissions a portrait which lovingly depicts all her split ends. She appears to be gritting her teeth, as well she might be.

12 September: Last week's drawing has clearly not met with la Barbie's approval, so the paper tries again — with a photograph in which her neck is discreetly hidden in shadow, and the edges of her hair are carefully cropped. She is grinning fit to bust.

19 September: Barber is, apparently, still not satisfied. This week she experiments with a photo in which her teeth are kept hidden, too; alas, in order to achieve this she has to stop grinning — which leaves her looking utterlyglum.

3 October: In desperation, Barbie tries a different picture of her grinning. It is a slight improvement, but regrettably draws attention to the bags under her eyes and the hint of a double chin.

10 October: While pondering her next move, Barber reverts for one week to the glum picture from a fortnight ago.

17 October: The new look is unveiled, in which she strives to appear cheerful while simultaneously keeping her teeth out of sight. Alas, the pursed-lip smile makes her look like someone who is trying desperately not to vomit. More alarmingly still, it gives her a passing resemblance to Peter McKay.

24 October: Back to the drawing board. While the art department searches for a new angle, the old misery-guts photo is revived for a few weeks.

14 November: Success at last! After more than two months of experiment, Barber has belatedly found a way to avoid the lockjaw look: instead of grinning, smile. No sooner is one difficulty overcome, however, than another returns to haunt her: how can you smile without creasing your eyes and thereby drawing attention to the bags beneath them? Perhaps she should team up with her colleague McHackey (now banished to the Home News pages) in the search for a cure: to judge by his latest picture byline, in today's issue, he is still no nearer an answer than she is...

LUVVIES

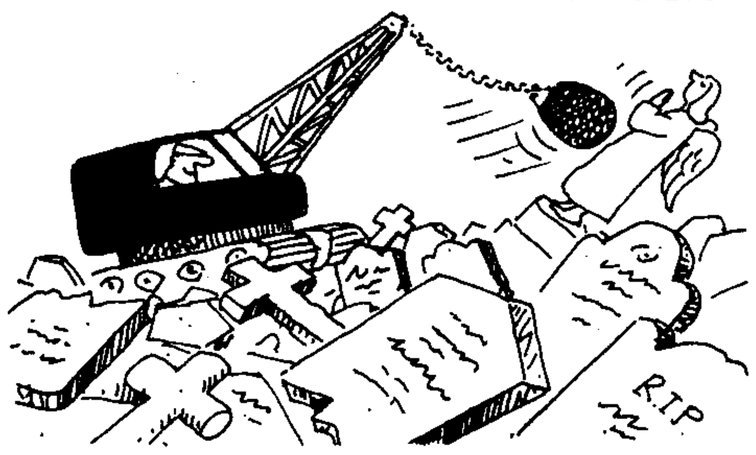
[Kitty] Aldridge researched her role in *To Play the King* by studying women close to No. 10. "They have this totally focused energy and a physical stillness that can give an apparent gravity and weight," she says.

Times

Submitted by APR.

An occasional column featuring gems from the acting profession. £10 paid for entries.

ROTTEN BOROUGHS



MERTHYR

THE Taffia in Merthyr (aka the Labour council group), mesmerised by the vision of tourism as a source of employment, seem to be losing their marbles over leisure developments.

Pentrebach, an area south of Merthyr, has already seen them support the abortive development of a ski-slope next to the local coal tips. The dream collapsed when it became apparent that the South Wales valleys were, surprisingly, not full of skiers. But Merthyr's Labour councillors have now taken the bait again.

When property development company Histar approached Merthyr Borough Council last year with a planning application to develop Pentrebach as a leisure complex, they were hailed as a big city concern who would provide jobs. Unfortunately, it was then revealed that Histar was, in fact, an off-the-shelf company linked to several other Histar firms speculating in property developments.

All went quiet until the last meeting of the leisure committee, during which the Taffia decided to spend £1m on providing the roads and infrastructure for Histar to develop the leisure complex, consisting of a swimming pool, hotel and golf course.

So gung-ho were the Labour group for the strangers offering gifts of leisure that they also sponsored an English rugby game. When Blackheath FC in London applied for grant aid from the Economic Development Committee to pay for a game against the Crawshays XV, the Taffia fell over themselves to support it.

What could be the connection between Merthyr and Blackheath rugby club? On the surface, it was that Crawshays were the exploitative ironmasters in Merthyr in the last century and there is a rugby team of that name — which actually has no more to do with Merthyr than Blackheath rugby club. The name proved enough for the Taffia, who promptly supplied £2,500 to support the game, which won't be much of a tourist attraction as it'll be played in London.

As Merthyr council tenants contemplate the damp on their walls, they will no doubt rejoice that their councillors are spending a million pounds supporting a private leisure complex. Local rugby clubs, however, are left wondering why Merthyr Council should spend £2,500 in supporting the old enemy.

Meanwhile the Labour Taffia are desperately hoping that no one will tell them the answer — that a certain Mr Webster, on the committee of Blackheath FC, is also a director of Histar.

NORTH WILTSHIRE

PETER WILSON, local Tory chieftain and chairman of Colerne parish council, is proving an embarrassment to his RAF friends who have reoccupied a disused wartime airfield at Colerne to offer free flying lessons to potential recruits.

There is no shortage of takers for this bonanza at the taxpayers' expense, and the programme even includes an annual 30-minute joyride (to provide so-called "air experience") for thousands of teenagers, mainly from private schools in a wide catchment area.

The use of ultra-noisy, low-flying aircraft five days a week, including weekends, has generated a storm of protest to which the RAF reacts, as one local confirmed, as if still shooting down the Luftwaffe with Spitfires.

Wilson is an ardent fan of the RAF and its totalitarian ways — so long as it refrains from overflying him and his neighbours in Colerne village. But he has made a major gaffe by publicising the private deal to protect his own backyard.

After referring to it (as "an informal agreement") in a circular to parishioners, he even boasted about it at a noisy public meeting of protesters, including local bigwigs like David Dodd, chairman of Northavon Conservative Association, whose MP happens to be the paymaster-general and former Tory whip, Sir John Cope.

Defence under-secretary Viscount Cranbourne, whose own vast house in Dorset is all peace and quiet, has officially denied there has been a deal, nudge or even a wink between the RAF and Wilson, who is related by marriage to Cranbourne's predecessor, Archie Hamilton MP.

LAMBETH

WITH the Appleby report into Lambeth council's missing millions delayed until next year, wrongdoing in Britain's looniest borough continues unabated.

While nearly 750 council employees are investigated for allegedly fiddling benefit claims (they are said to have been signing on to supplement their salaries), the council has voted *not* to suspend the suspends, nor to ask the benefits agency for evidence against the 750.

Housing officers at the council's Hambrook House site, meanwhile, have forgotten the financial crisis and got on with the more serious business of making naughty videos — much to the chagrin of assistant housing director Keith Scrace, who has been suspended while Inspector Knacker of the south London vice squad takes down particulars.

The increasing number of suspensions and dismissals means there will soon be no one left to write the next round of suspension notices. Scrace was himself in charge of the panel investigating Lambeth's chief solicitor, David Tatlow, who was suspended in May for irregularities in contracting. Tatlow resigned on "health grounds" in November. And not even Lambeth's elected Labour leaders are safe. Council leader Steve Whaley, housing chair Peter Mountford-Smith and mayor Marion Schumann have all been deselected by their own ward Labour parties.

"There must be some mistake – I'm in the City!"

BIRMINGHAM

NANCY Johnson, self-styled liberator of Birmingham's Afro-Caribbeans, has finally been sacked from the Harambee Housing Association by another black woman.

Patricia Scotland QC was called in to investigate losses of £250,000 under Johnson's chairmanship, comprising uncollected rents amounting to £70,000, unpaid mortgages to the Housing Corporation of £50,000 and other unpaid bills of £130,000.

Ms Scotland also questioned how a schizophrenic woman, Jennifer Cope, died from meningitis and lay undiscovered for weeks in a hostel for which Johnson had won huge DSS grants by claiming it was an intensive care hostel.

And she made a careful study of the huge expenses bills submitted by Johnson and her acolytes. Treasurer Annette Hanson has also been sacked.

But Johnson retains her other job — as head of the Birmingham city council women's unit where any serious inquiry into her conduct has been deemed politically incorrect.

BIRMINGHAM education personnel officers have launched a swift course in employment law for governors at Springfield School in Sparkbrook.

Springfield is the school that managed to appoint a head teacher who had no paid school teaching experience. Noshaba Hussain was given the £28,000-a-year job by a three-strong sub-committee of governors which included a fellow member of the Muslim Parliament, Mohammed Yussouf, and his nephew, who, like her, was a member of Sparkbrook Conservative party.

But a palace revolution over the appointment saw Yussouf deposed as chairman of governors. Now his replacement, Samfar Butt, has suspended her.

A new sub-committee has been set up to decide her fate, led by city councillor Raghib Ahsan — but the city's education department is well aware that Hussain has a history of taking legal action against her employers, and even took the Commission for Racial Equality to a tribunal alleging sexual harassment.

So personnel experts have been sent in to brief the governors. It is of course not certain that Hussain will be dismissed — but if she is they know they must get it right.

Meanwhile Hussain has engaged Peter Carter-Ruck and has told the city all dealings must go through her lawyers. It could be months before her fate is resolved — throughout which she will be on full pay and the 600 children at Springfield will effectively remain without a head teacher.

GLASGOW

IN AN ATTEMPT to clean up Glasgow, razor-fighting capital of Europe, councillors have enforced a strict curfew on the city's drinking dens and discos.

Licensing chairman James Coleman thought it would help stop late-night violence... but the message has not got through to his colleagues. Calton Labour member Tony McCartney has recently been fined £75 for assaulting a disabled man in a Glasgow pub.

HUSBAND

UN NEWS

IT IS embarrassing enough for the UN to be holding its 1995 Decennial International Women's Conference in Beijing, where those wonderful people who brought us the Tiananmen Square massacre are now tacitly condoning prostitution, concubinage, and female infanticide in the name of liberalisation.

In preparation, the UN has passed a fine-sounding Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women. So there were red faces in the organisation when the New York press discovered that general secretary Boutros Boutros Ghali's special advisor, Alvaro De Soto, had used his diplomatic immunity to head off the inquiries of New York's finest, who had been called to the De Soto residence by his wife.

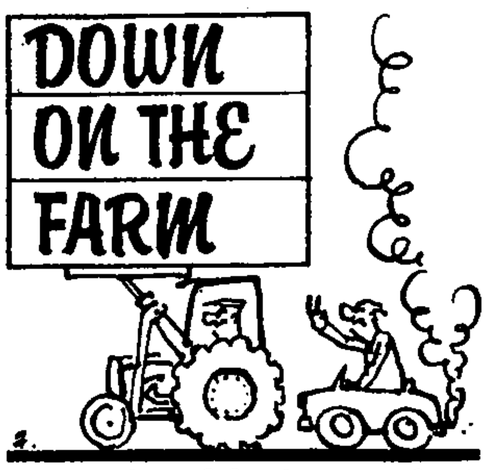
The corridors of the UN are rife with speculation about how serious the occasion for her panic was. To celebrate, with the sense of timing and delicacy for which he has become famous, Boo Boo announced that Mr De Soto would in future be his chief spin doctor, heading his spokesman's office.

WHEN New Zealand foreign minister Don McKinnon described the recent *Eye* story about the recall of the Kiwi ambassador to the UN as "a load of crap", he was being more vigorous than accurate.

When the *Eye* suggested (827) that the government had successfully put pressure on New Zealand to withdraw Terry O'Brien, its ambassador to the UN, for being over-vociferous about the plight of Bosnia, we did not know that O'Brien had "left" the New Zealand foreign service completely to take up a new academic career.

Certainly New Zealand's voice has been much quieter in the security council since. Like everyone else, it even stayed silent when, at the end of October, Boo Boo Ghali reported that no fewer than 937 flights had now violated the UN's really serious no-fly zone over Bosnia.

"... and Daddy would like a new government"



with 'New Muckspreader'

SO RICH are the pickings from common agricultural policy (CAP) reforms that some barley barons are said to be earning upwards of £400,000 in European Community subsidies administered by our own lunatic ministry of agriculture (MAFF).

Such rumours worry rank and file farmers who fear that if publicity about such unearned riches reaches the likes of redundant miners, it might halt the gravy train in its tracks.

Not least of these are the farmers who flocked to a recent meeting at Reading university to hear Malcome Stansfield, director of the farm management unit, say: "We must have the answers available to tell the public why we've got the money."

Midland "listening" bank agricultural director, Norman Coward, told the audience: "We must do all we can to ensure people know it's just been a change in the method by which compensation is given."

Despite Coward's enthusiasm for over-generous subsidies — which cannot do his bank's cashflow any harm — there is no truth in the rumour that he is to run nationwide seminars telling farmers on how to defend them. Perhaps he knows what agriculture minister Gillian Shephard is already hinting at: that the gravy train is so generous it cannot last. Warning farmers to "keep in touch with their bankers", he forecasts "there will be a lot more first-time borrowers out there shortly". Then farmers can go back to their familiar role of pleading poverty.

RANK AND FILE farmers are not the only ones steeling themselves for bad publicity. Egg producers are expecting a fresh barrage on food-poisoning from the public health laboratory service (PHLS) when it appears before the Commons agriculture select committee in January.

Using what it calls "unpublished data", the service is expected to make capital out of finding a grand total of four eggs — from a sample of 46,380 — infected with more than 10,000 salmonella bacteria after they had been kept warm for five weeks.

What particularly irritates producers is the PHLS's habit of making headlines out of "unpublished data", circumventing the normal review process of publishing in reputable science journals. Too often, long after the headlines have become fish and chip wrappings, their fully published findings turn out to be flawed.

No doubt the PHLS hopes some other recently published "findings" turn out to be flawed. The Western Daily Press has just run a particularly juicy story about "lab chief" Ian Ferguson being arrested. Ferguson is director of the Hereford public health laboratory, and has been granted leave of absence for "personal reasons". Unlike his PHLS colleagues, for the time being Mr Ferguson will not be going to work on an egg.

MAFF has also become coy about publicity judging by its recent complaint to the press complaints commission (PCC) about coverage of BSE in the *Sunday Hellograph*.

Spearheaded by Richard Packer, permanent secretary, the ministry has complained about the use of the Purdey thesis — that BSE may be caused by OP pesticides (*Eyes passim*) — to attack the "professionalism" of the government's chief veterinary officer, nice Mr K.C. Meldrum.

So keen is MAFF to make its point to the commission that it quotes from Mark Purdey's as yet unpublished paper on the links between BSE and OPs. The only problem is that Purdey supplied the paper at the direct request of Gillian Shephard to prepare the way for formal discussions with officials about his theory. He did so only when Shephard specifically reassured him that the paper would remain in confidence, "as is usual with such papers".

So sensitive is his ministry about Mr Meldrum's virtue — the egregious Meldrum having staked his reputation on the success of his ministry's increasingly discredited BSE policy — that it seems anything goes, even betraying a confidence offered by his own minister. But then such behaviour is to be expected at MAFF...

SALLY DEEDES

FILLING in an insurance policy application and returning it to the insurer with a cheque is no guarantee of obtaining cover.

To judge by the case of reader Richard Elliott, it can take up to six months for a policy to be activated.

In the late summer of 1992, Mr Elliott contacted the Abbey National building society, with whom he had his mortgage. He thought it sensible to insure his household contents through Abbey National, too.

He twice said on the telephone he would be going away on 1 October and was anxious for his possessions to be covered over that period. He was assured verbally — but not in writing — that this would happen.

On his return in the middle of October a card was waiting for him from Abbey National saying that his application was being processed. There was no confirmation of cover, but there was a second quote, identical to the first save for the inclusion of a "special gift incentive" that had to be claimed by February 1992 — only eight months late! It also included a direct debit form.

Unsure if he was covered or not, he rang a week later and was told that he was but that the company did not have his bank details. He gave his details for the third time, the policy arrived a few days later and that was the end of it. Or so he thought.

Checking his December bank statement, Mr Elliott saw that no premiums had been paid — and nor were they paid in January. When he asked what was going on, Abbey National said it had not received his direct debit mandate — and, no, it had not thought to contact him!

Furious, he faxed Chris Pitt, customer services manager. Things became even more bizarre when, a few days later, a Mrs O'Rourke rang from the insurance department to confirm that his policy was in force... but that it was just about to lapse due to non-payment. She said her department had sent three computer-generated reminders. Since Mr Elliott had never received one, let alone three, he asked for a copy. This didn't arrive either. He again gave his bank details and asked how much he should pay to make up the arrears. Another direct debit mandate was sent — but no figure was mentioned.

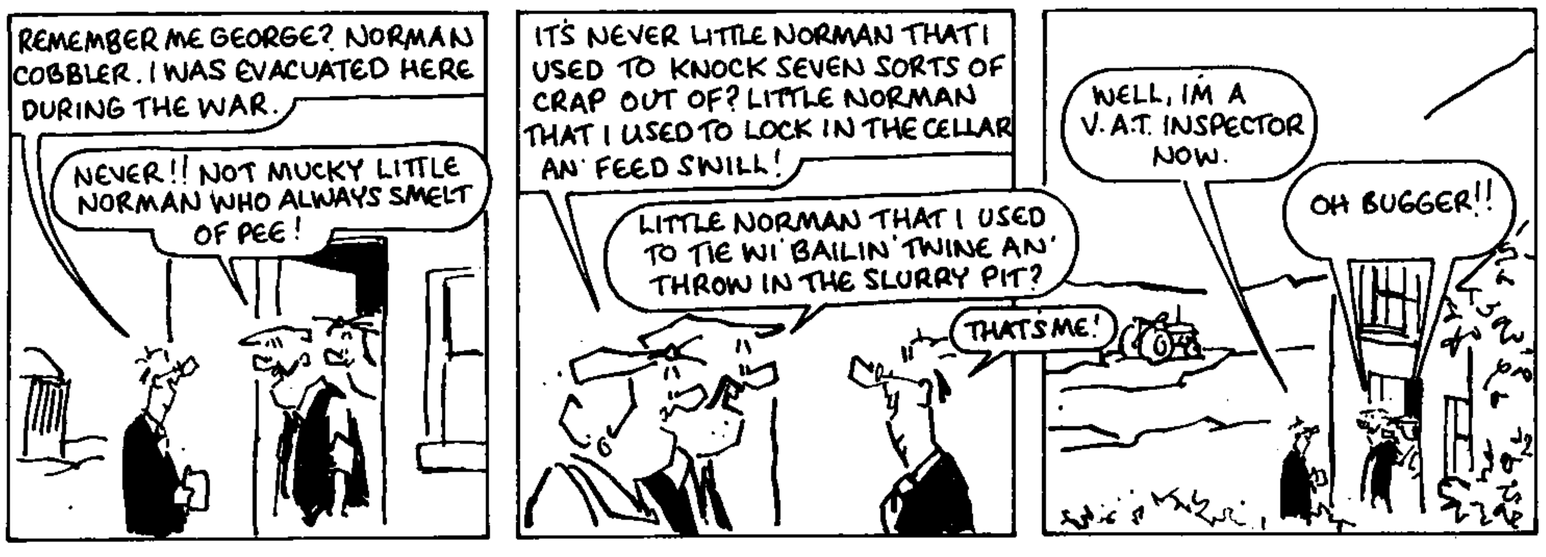
A week later, having heard nothing and worrying lest his policy might be cancelled, Mrs O'Rourke rang to say that as her computer was down she could not give the figures he needed until later. At his wits end, he rang the press office of Abbey National. It gave him the figures he needed there and then, on top of which arrears were waived and Mr Elliott was sent £50 for expenses.

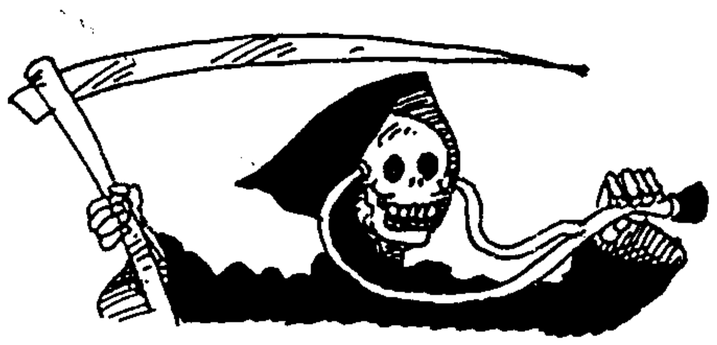
All was finally sweetness and light — until last month when Mr Elliott moved house and asked Abbey National to transfer his contents policy to the new home. Two days before his move he was told that since the company was no longer holding his mortgage it would not renew his insurance. Mr Elliott therefore had no cover while moving. When he asked Abbey National why it had taken so long to reply, he was told that his letter had only just arrived — three weeks after posting!

Mr Elliott is quite philosophical. Thank goodness, he says, he never had to make a claim against the Abbey National policy.

Old Macdonald

ALBERT


REMEMBER ME GEORGE? NORMAN COBBLER. I WAS EVACUATED HERE DURING THE WAR.
NEVER!! NOT MUCKY LITTLE NORMAN WHO ALWAYS SMELT OF PEE!
IT'S NEVER LITTLE NORMAN THAT I USED TO KNOCK SEVEN SORTS OF CRAP OUT OF? LITTLE NORMAN THAT I USED TO LOCK IN THE CELLAR AN' FEED SWILL!
LITTLE NORMAN THAT I USED TO TIE WI' BAILIN' TWINE AN' THROW IN THE SLURRY PIT?
THAT'S ME!
WELL, I'M A V.A.T. INSPECTOR NOW.
OH BUGGER!!



DOING THE ROUNDS

TOTAL disbelief has greeted the decision by managers at crisis-torn Alder Hey Children's Hospital in Liverpool to turn down a £300,000 donation from the family of murdered toddler James Bulger. Instead, managers propose to *cut spending* by £1 million at a hospital where doctors already describe the situation as "intolerable".

The parents of James Bulger wanted to donate up to £300,000 from their son's memorial fund to the hospital where James was once treated for a minor illness. They had hoped the money could go towards a new intensive care unit, and asked if it could be named after James. The offer was turned down by the trust board of management because it is not hospital policy to name particular buildings after individual donors.

But it is hospital policy to cut jobs, drugs and services to balance next year's books.

The week of 15 November was one of crisis for the management team as doctors, nurses and parents rounded on the inadequacies of chief executive Pearse Butler and his team. On Monday, a letter signed by 15 doctors lambasted the situation as "intolerable", talked of a "serious lowering of standards" and complained of shortages, understaffing, delays and low morale. Their conclusion was that increasing pressure on staff "will almost certainly lead eventually to mistakes being made..."

The next day Mrs Jeanette Hirst announced that she would be suing Alder Hey for negligence over the death of her 12-year-old son, Martin. He died of a burst appendix two days after being sent home from the hospital. Mrs Hirst claimed that the family had to wait for four hours in casualty before Martin, who was continually coughing up blood, was finally treated.

After news that the Bulger Fund money had been turned down, parents of young heart patients claimed they were frightened to leave their children's bedsides because of staff shortages. This line was backed up by Royal College of Nursing allegations that health bosses ignored their concern for patient well-being and went ahead with "cutting back on employment of nurses, casualisation of the workforce and the closure of beds and wards..."

By the end of the week, ten operations scheduled for the weekend were cancelled because low-paid hospital staff were not prepared to turn in on their day off for £2.50 an hour. Attempts by higher paid staff to pool money so the operations backlog might be cleared were soundly squashed by hospital bigwigs.

The news that Alder Hey chief Pearse Butler (inexplicably dubbed "Piss" Butler by his health authority colleagues) is to become chief executive of **Wirral health authority**, will gladden many hearts — on the Liverpool side of the Mersey at any rate.

● SIR JIMMY SAVILE will judge a leadership award for NHS bosses, lavishly sponsored by the

NHS management executive. Possible contenders include Vivien Rink, the new chairman of **Bolton community health care trust,** who admits that "four months ago, I didn't have a clue about the health service". Mrs Rink, who has been "cramming relentlessly since June to become an expert", has twice opted for private healthcare under her husband Tony's policy. "I've had two illnesses which were so serious I think I would have been in trouble if I didn't go privately," she said. "The NHS has such a bad reputation."

Or it could be Colonel Bob Crawford, who has abandoned his job as head of the American army's European HQ to become chief executive of the £1 million-indebted **Scarborough NHS trust**. Colonel Bob, who has no experience of the NHS, said: "I did not know about the job and did not look for it."

Or even David Jackson, chief executive of the cash-strapped **Bradford hospitals NHS trust,** who has secured a £175,000 NHS minimal interest bridging loan to ease his passage from Grimsby to Leeds and then on to Bradford. Or Ray Gillard, unit general manager of **Worcester Royal Infirmary**, who has been enjoying an £8,500 NHS-funded trip to the US via Concorde for "an insight into the way American managers from service industries tackle their roles".

● DR GRAHAM WINYARD, the deputy chief medical officer, has reported on his "options appraisal group", set up to tackle the problems of junior doctors (*Eye* 827). Dr Winyard recommends that there be no ceiling on the number of senior house officers, and that they should continue to be contracted to be on duty for 83 hours, but not do more than 56 hours' actual work.

Although an expansion in consultant numbers is also seen as desirable, Winyard cautions that it won't occur at the same rate as for junior doctors, not least because the royal colleges are dead against it. No limit was put on the number of staff grade doctors, a sub-consultant post for those not quite, er, white enough to make it to the top.

In effect, senior house officers will continue to do most of the donkey and emergency work, and many will be on their feet for far longer than 56 hours a week. A select few will then be groomed for the consultant grade, while the rest languish as staff grade doctors or associate specialists.

● MRS BOTTOMLEY has decided to close the pioneering **Lord Mayor Treloar orthopaedic hospital** in **Alton, Hampshire** (*Eyes passim*), and in **Belfast**, the province's two largest hospitals, the **Royal Victoria** and **City trusts**, are due to merge in an attempt to recoup a £10 million loss.

In **Liverpool**, the **Royal, Aintree, Broadgreen** and **Whiston hospitals** are having trouble coping with a rise in emergency admissions and there have been log-jams in casualty. What will happen to the patients when the planned closure of **Broadgreen's** busy casualty department goes ahead is unclear.

● DOCTORS at **St Mary's hospital, Paddington,** have had annual parking fees imposed on them without consultation. The charges, which also affect managers, are £150 a year for juniors and £300 a year for seniors.

● BETWEEN 1989 and April 1993, 30,000 managers, clerical and administrative staff were added to the NHS to implement the reforms at a cost of £366 million. A further £300 million was spent on computerising hospitals, £69 million went on setting up trusts and £47 million was used to pamper GP fundholders. Worth it?

M.D.

ENERGY NEWS

IT seems piggish to criticise the nuclear industry yet again for falsely offering rosy forecasts but then it did put so much emphasis on building Sizewell B to time and to cost... It was essential, it kept saying, right back to the days of Lord (Walter) Marshall, if the industry was to establish credibility.

But last week Nuclear Electric admitted that the station would be "up to four months" behind its scheduled opening of May 1994 — which means it will be *at least* four months late.

Until now Nuclear Electric had been insisting (see *Eye* of March 29, 1991) that it was eight months *ahead* of schedule and that it would use the French computer system for controlling the monster station despite the decision of the French nuclear authorities not to use it. After bluffing for four months, it reluctantly admitted that it would not be able after all to use the French computer system and was changing to Westinghouse. And we commented: "Nuclear Electric is starting the arduous task of changing to a different system. It insists it will not mean any delay or extra cost. This is rubbish."

Nuclear Electric now says it is within its *original* target date but it then set itself an extra-tough target, which is the one it is failing to meet. It does not explain why a date which it believed possible is now impossible. It would help if Nuclear Electric stayed with the same story.

As to the cost, it was originally estimated at £1.2 billion. It is now £2.03 billion at 1987 prices. Nuclear Electric claims that it has risen because it has been confined to one PWR when it wanted to build a "family" of stations which would have shared the burden. This is fiction. Throughout more than two years of the Sizewell inquiry, all estimates were based on the idea of building one PWR. The plan for a "family" did not even exist.

Nuclear Electric is also insisting that it is ready to put itself on the market and be privatised. We can only repeat the words we used two years ago: "This is rubbish."

JOHN Selwyn Gummer, the Minister responsible for giving the starting signal for THORP, is having serious religious doubts about his decision. He has at last understood that the plant will cause 2,050 deaths, according to official calculations. And this is the reason, say sources close to the Department of the Environment, for the delay in announcing the government's decision. Mr Gummer is a very devout man.

The calculation of the deaths stems from the accepted fact that THORP will increase the discharges of radiation into the sea and the atmosphere from Sellafield. The official National Radiological Protection Board has produced data estimating that it will add 4,100 man-Sieverts a year as long as it functions. The NRPB endorses the theory of "detriment from collective doses" of the International Commission on Radiological Protection which calculates that there are 0.05 deaths per man-Sievert. This means 20 m-Sv produce one death and 4,100 m-Sv result in 205 deaths a year. If THORP continues to operate for 10 years, there will be 2,050 deaths.

A man-Sievert is the unit of a collective dose of radiation received by all members of a population.

Other, less devout, members of the establishment have a different motive for delay. They are concerned with choosing a heavy news day when an announcement will attract least attention.

Letters

Thatch life

Sir,

Walking north on Michigan Avenue early one evening last week, I saw a crowd of people lined up outside of a book store. On enquiring, I learned that Mrs Thatcher was to autograph her book. Thinking it might make a suitable Xmas gift for a friend, I joined the line. While in line, I realised I had PRIVATE EYE *in my suit coat pocket, it having arrived in the day's mail. So when I finally reached the table with my book, I also put down the* EYE *and asked her to "Sign for Dennis". I enclose a copy — returned with a grin...*

Sincerely,
TED SULLIVAN,

Chicago.

Beware Greeks bearing tips

Sir,

Having been thrice named in embarrassingly heroic terms by your magazine down the years it is with considerable relief that I finally find myself slagged off. In this instance, it is over my involvement with a projected PANORAMA *on the Asil Nadir case (*EYE *833).*

You will be delighted to know that just as the previous references to me were flattering in the extreme (in order to knife someone else) so, in time-honoured tradition, your attack also bears virtually no resemblance to the truth.

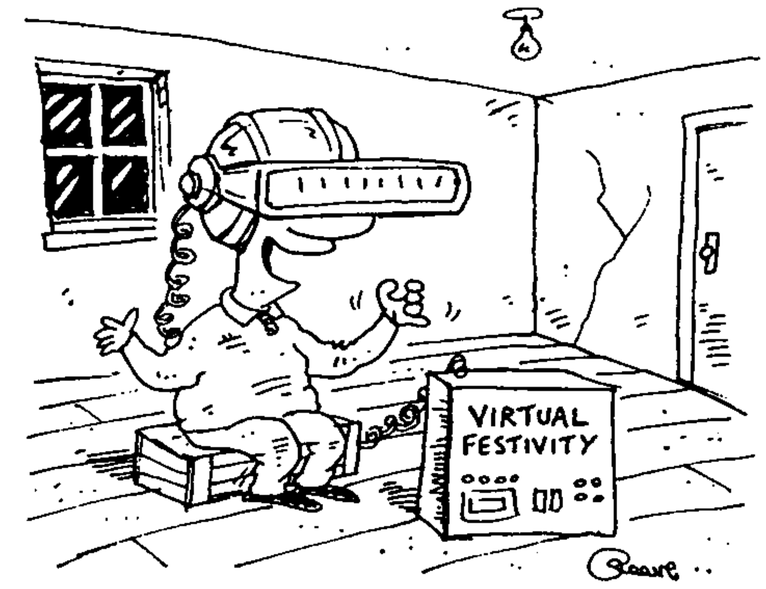
What is true is that last spring the MONEY PROGRAMME *tried to get an interview with Nadir but, as any rival journalist would, I tied up Nadir for* PANORAMA. *This did not go down too well with the* MONEY PROGRAMME, *who jumped to the conclusion (wrongly) that* PANORAMA *must have got its interviews by promising a pro-Nadir line.*

Incidentally, you may be interested to know that a senior member of the Greek Cypriot government has gone on record with the rather serious claim that for more than a decade he used some pro-Greek journalists in London to plant scurrilous, highly-damaging stories about Nadir in the EYE. *Apparently, this was to further the Greek Cypriots' obsessive campaign to weaken the share price of Polly Peck and ruin Nadir, whom they still see as a major obstacle to their plans for annexation of the Turkish-occupied part of the island.*

As a long-time admirer of Lord Gnome's fearless investigative organ I realise that this is patently absurd. Indeed, regular readers of your "In the City" page know very well that Slicker has been a lone voice in championing the Nadir cause and must have given the Serious Fraud Office many a sleepless night. The allegation that the EYE *could have been unwittingly used as a pawn in the Greek Cypriots' game is totally without foundation and I will move heaven and earth to ensure that it never sees the light of day.*

Yours faithfully,
ROGER RATCLIFFE,

Aire Press & Publishing, Ilkley, W. Yorks.



"Merry Christmas, everybody!"

Slick joke

Sir,

To pick up a couple of points Slicker made about Asil Nadir and the bogus plot to bribe his judge. Shortly after the article, the Crown Prosecution Service ruled there was no credible evidence anyway — so a lot of Slicker's speculation is already redundant. Sorry but neither I nor the INDEPENDENT *"credulously" swallowed the story told by the two police witnesses — we reported only what we can independently prove. Remember that the police took them seriously for an awfully long time — that was our story.*

Why? Are they so naive? We talked to Nadir, and we talked to the other side as well. I don't think anybody — the police, SFO, trustees — accuse us of not giving them a say, or working as Nadir propagandists. I worry about Slicker. This whole Nadir thing's been his from the start, I know that. But who's kidding whom? Slicker knows perfectly well on whose behalf he's been running errands for all these years. Perhaps he'd like to come clean. Surely even Slicker is interested in getting to the bottom of this Nadir business — find out just who has been lying to whom...

Sincerely,
TIM KELSEY,

THE INDEPENDENT, *London EC1.*

Lookalike

Clinton

Mellor

Sir,

May I draw your attention to the uncanny resemblance between David Mellor, MP for Putney, and Hillary Clinton, the First Lady. Do they by any chance share the same orthodontist?

Yours faithfully,
MS OLIVIA LANDSBERG,

London SW6.

Legionary's disease

Sir,

You mention "the tasty scrap in the Black Country" where my seat, Warley East, is to be amalgamated with another (19 November 1993). I am perfectly happy to face a contest with my good colleague, the fixer John Spellar. I have a long habit of winning in the marginal I have now held for nearly twenty-eight years. But the decision will be for the local party members (now somewhat enhanced by mass admissions to Brandhall Labour Club) and, of course, the dear Lord whose likely summons at my advanced age I shall try to delay. I am resigned to all that — though not to resigning!

But you must get your pretty researcher — whose bottom needs spanking — to be more exact! Far from being "a one line Roman centurion in the film CLEOPATRA*", I had a distinguished and voluble role as Canidius, one of Antony's generals who also features in Shakespeare's version — and whom I played many years ago at Stratford upon Avon!*

Kind regards.

Sincerely,
ANDREW FAULDS MP,

House of Commonds, London SW1.

Skuse me

Sir,

You really are tilting at windmills that don't exist (Colour Section, November 19). Where on earth did you get the idea that either I or this newspaper were "hostile" to the Birmingham Six?

Put up or shut up. In the meantime, you may wish to consider the following:

[Rhodes encloses 11 extracts from 1986-1991, which are plainly supportive of the Birmingham Six and the campaign to release them.]

With hostility like this, who needs friends?

Against this sort of coverage, is it really so odd, outrageous or offensive to the EYE *that we should run an exclusive interview with Frank Skuse who, after all these years and in the face of so much derision, still defends his reputation and his science?*

To suggest that my last missive to the EYE *was "a sad attempt at self-justification" implies we have something to justify. What?*

PETER RHODES,

Chief Feature Writer, EXPRESS & STAR, *Wolverhampton.*

Load of Cossacks

Sir,

The subject of your snippet entitled "Very Old Libel News" in your 19th November issue is about Allalongtimeago as you used to say. But that, surely, does not make it necessary for you to confuse your readers by quoting two statements made by me about two different matters which may lead your readers to think that I have contradicted myself.

The statement reported in the TATLER *referred to the repatriation of Yugoslavs. The statement mentioning General Arbuthnott was about what that much-admired General said about the repatriation of the Cossacks,* NOT *what I thought. My position on the Cossacks was exhaustively discussed in the nearly nine weeks trial in 1989 and was best explained during my cross-examination by Count Tolstoy's counsel. I explained many times on oath that I did not hold General Arbuthnott's view and, manifestly, the jury believed me.*

Yours faithfully,
ALDINGTON,

Aldington, Kent.

Nice one, Cyrillic

Sir,

Tom Carter (Letters, EYE *833) is a "khuyesos" — the nearest Russian equivalent I could think of for dickhead, but nothing like as polite.*

His geography is not bad, since Kazakhstan is indeed the second biggest of the former Soviet republics by area (even though only the fourth largest by population). But he pushes pedantry a little too far when he takes you to task for your Latin alphabet transliteration of Nazarbayev's name, when this can only ever be an approximation of the Cyrillic original.

However, if he is going to get funny about they way you spell things, then he should pay a little more attention to "do svidanya". The "s" belongs to "svidanya" not "do", and the first vowel in "svidanya" is very much closer to "i" than "e".

"Poka" (Russian for T.T.F.N.),

VINCENT NUTT,

Kronberg, Germany.

Beyond our Ken

Sir,

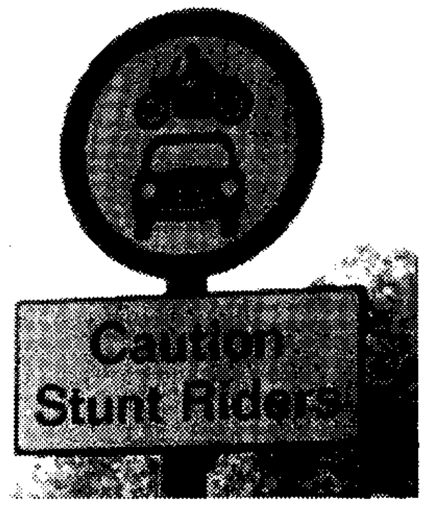
*Having offered your first year law lecture to m'learned friend Anthony Julius (*EYE *833) you demonstrate ample need for sitting through a first year economics lesson.*

The mess inherited by Mr Kenneth Clarke is the government's fiscal deficit (aka PSBR). Raising taxes will not cure a balance of payments problem, only increased exports, decreased imports or a combination of the two will do that.

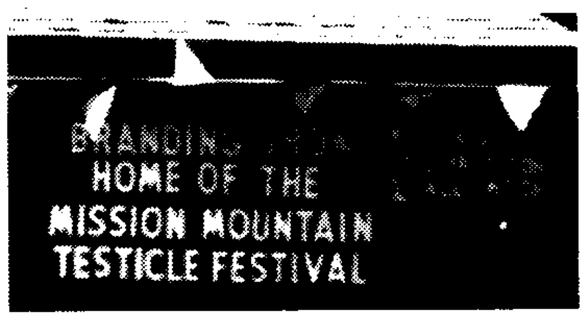
Yours faithfully,
JOHN MALONEY,

London N4.

I-SPY



Epping Forest



Montana

Submitted by E.M. Craig, B. Iggles. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

Spooky

Sir,

Re Footnotes, MI5/MI6 Building.

Er — no — sorry. That's actually the present MI6 building at 100 Westminster Bridge Road.

Yours,
STELLA.

The Great Debate

Sir,

*The important TV producer Harry Thompson's letter in support of David Baddiel (*EYE *831) should not be dismissed as mindless sycophancy.*

He quite rightly points out Baddiel's excellent double first in English literature — an achievement only equalled by one other comedian, Bernie Winters.

It proves beyond any doubt that Baddiel is supremely qualified to use words like "shag" and "fart" endlessly in their proper context.

If I were forced to make any distinction between Winters and Baddiel, I'd say that no one found Bernie Winters funny, whereas David Baddiel clearly thinks himself extremely amusing.

Yours faithfully,
RON GUMMER,

Grolsch Professor of Modern Literature, Emmanuel College, Cambridge.

Sir,

I went to school with David Baddiel, though as I've been out of the country for about 5 years I haven't seen his show, and didn't even realise he was famous until reading your Diary piece.

I wasn't good enough to be in his English set, but I can confirm that he was also very good at Geography.

He was a nice bloke (kind enough to once lend me one of his Supertramp LPs to tape) and a committed left winger before any of us had even heard of Ben Elton.

Indeed, I liked him enough to give him one of the 3 votes he secured as Independent Socialist candidate in our school mock General Election in 1979. The Tory won with about 400 votes I think. As I assumed Dave polled for himself, I wonder if the other voter will now come forward, as I've always wondered who you are.

Yours faithfully,
PAUL MORGAN,

Hong Kong.

Sir,

The last edition of your organ contained yet more facts 'n' figures from the never-dull (?) Harry Thompson, on the subject of his fledgling funsters Messrs Newman & Baddiel. His boys, he assures us, are staggeringly popular and enjoy an audience of 3.3 million people. This is roughly half that of Hale & Pace (another "popular" comic pairing) and a tiny percentage of the brave punters who every week enter the world of Jeremy Beadle (some relation?). Three popular shows. But funny? None of the above!

Yours,
PROF. E.F. STILLWELL,

Widcombe, Bath.

● *That's enough Newman & Baddiel letters — Ed.*

Child abuse

Sir,

I must protest at the uncaring, crass, cruel portrayal of the Royal children on the cover of your last PRIVATE EYE.

They were probably subjected to taunts and snide remarks at which schoolboys excel. Their lives must be difficult enough without your unwelcome contribution.

Please apologise in your next issue. I shall look out for it.

Yours faithfully,
KAY LOCKE,

Brighton.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

David Hepworth: *You were born in Europe, weren't you?*
Jackson Browne: *That's right — Germany.*
Hepworth: *How come?*
Browne: *My parents were there at the time.*
GLR
(R.S. Gaunt)

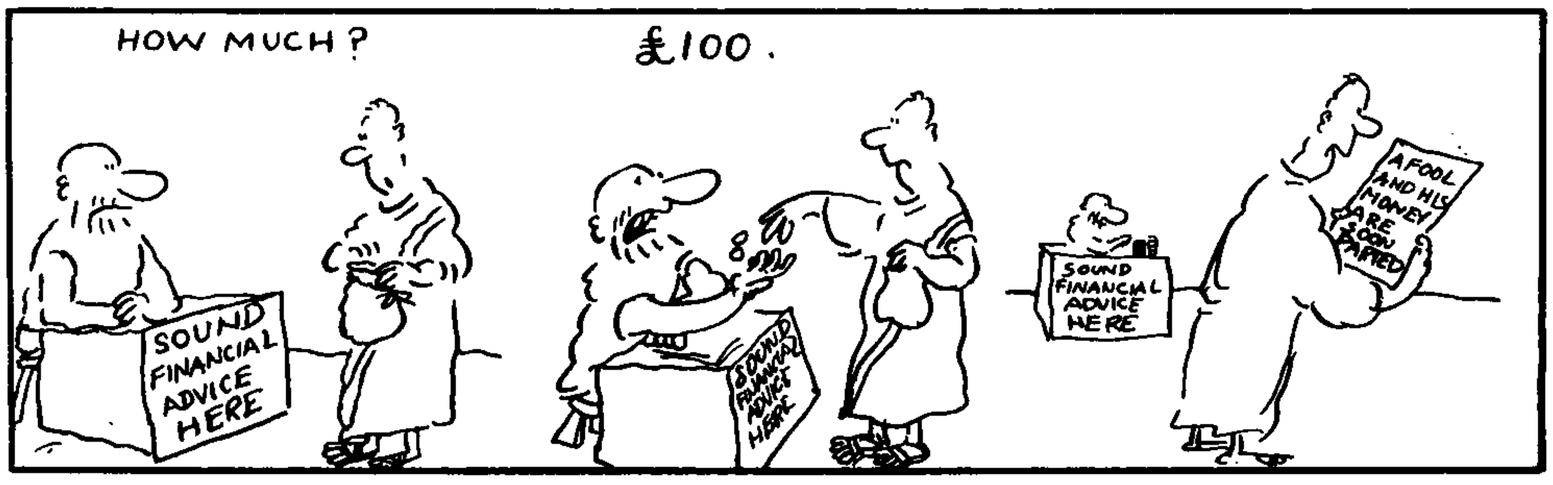
"We showed what English footballers and English football is all about. We played the Continentals at their own game."
GEORGE GRAHAM (Arsenal manager)
(Ms G. Wilson)

"You mention these talks as a carrot. Surely the carrot has now been extinguished?"
INTERVIEWER, BBC2
(P. Donoghue)

"Our athletes are flying the flagship for British sport."
FATIMA WHITBREAD, GLR
(F.E. Gibbard)

HOM SAP

BY DAVID AUSTIN



Letter from Haiti

from Our Own Correspondent

"WHO'S in charge?" bellowed ultra-rightist senator Jesse Helms at a cowering secretary of state, Warren Christopher, during recent congressional hearings.

Embarrassed by the farcical sight of an American troop ship being repelled from the dockside in Port-au-Prince by a few dozen Tonton Macoute thugs, congressmen could be forgiven for believing that US attempts to oust a brutal military regime in Haiti have made Somalia and Bosnia look like American foreign policy successes.

Ironically, the truth seems to be that Jesse Helms and his Reagan-was-a-dangerous-liberal friends in the CIA are in charge. In recent weeks a story straight out of the Ollie North fantasy book has begun to unravel here. If it concerned anywhere other than Haiti it would be on the way to Contragate notoriety.

CIA low-grades — sufficiently "off the books" to guarantee a modicum of plausible deniability — have been actively undermining US policy in Haiti. Lynn Garrison, a retired Canadian pilot and veteran of Libya destabilisation campaigns, has linked up with two Central America covert action retreads, Henry Womack and Kevin Kattke, to direct the Haitian military's efforts to counteract Washington's attempts to restore leftist President Jean-Bertrand Aristide to power.

Pleasant company this lot. After Helms and Co had leaked a CIA report by the agency's leading Latin American specialist, Brian Latell, labelling Aristide "flaky" and "mentally unstable", Garrison was quick to claim the credit. "Everything they know about Aristide comes from me," he told the press. "The Haitians are just too nice. I am the mean son of a bitch down here." Latell, incidentally, visited Haiti in July 1992, to find "no evidence of systematic repression" at a time when the military's death toll was estimated at 1,500.

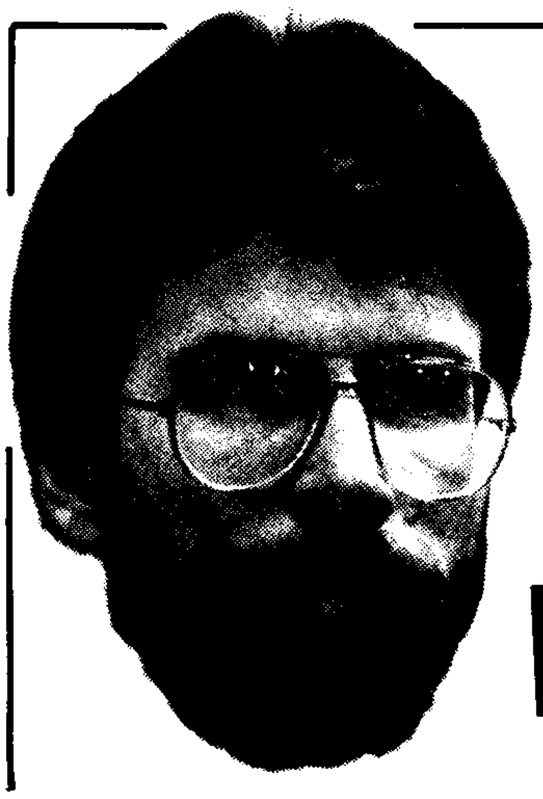
The agency has been protecting the military beneficiaries of this little bit of freelance foreign policy by means of a cocaine smuggling racket they themselves set up accidentally on purpose a few years back. The unironically named SIN, the Haitian intelligence agency — a CIA "liaison" organisation set up by the CIA in 1986 to pass on intelligence on drug smuggling — is a gamekeeper turned poacher, having used its information to squeeze rivals out of the cocaine trade — now worth up to US$500 million a year in Haiti, according to Washington's own estimates.

Unsurprisingly, the agency has only been going to these lengths to protect its own. Cedras, his militant sidekick, Port-au-Prince police chief Michel Francois and several others now on Washington's most wanted list, were on the CIA payroll à la Manuel Noriega until at least 1991. "Inevitably the US government develops relationships with ambitious and bright young men at the beginning of their careers and follows them through their public service..." claimed one of Helms's friends on the House foreign relations committee.

But the real problem has been the change of government in Washington. When good old Bush, the CIA men's former boss, was in power, agency men knew the form. Having paid for, monitored and reluctantly accepted Aristide's election — the American boy was embarrassed at the polls, notching up just 13 percent to Aristide's 67 percent, a gap even the CIA didn't try to fudge — Uncle Sam's post-coup task was clear: wholehearted verbal support for the results of the democratic process, minimal real action to ensure it was enforced.

Rookie Clinton just doesn't understand these diplomatic niceties. He seems to mean what he says. Even seems to believe in democracy for black Caribbean republics. However, he and Warren Christopher don't seem to have a clue how to achieve it and until now at least the "off-the-books" CIA has been able to play in the vacuum of ignorance and vacillation.

But for how much longer? Recent revelations have so incensed even Republican congressmen that Haiti might catalyse action to dismantle the inevitable legacy of the Reagan-Bush years when covert action and intelligence gathering became synonymous. Bills are already being proposed, CIA budget-cutting proposals being honed. Unless of course Clinton's in such a mess on foreign policy that he gets an offer from Ollie North to sort it all out...



NEW CHAT LINE

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● Meet new friends. Exchange papers! Swap ideas! Talk dirty tricks!

All exclusively available on the Mayhow Madcap Chat Line!

WRESTLING SPECIAL ★ THE BIG FIGHT

1st BOUT

Libel Trophy Prize Money: Unlimited

"Macho" Melve — The South Bank Lightweight

v.

"Dimwit" Dobbs — The BBC Even Lighterweight

Referee: Justice Cocklecarrot. Seconds: P. Carter-Fuck, Sir J. Goldsmith.

Don't miss this all-legal-action bout between two of Britain's top crashers!

2nd BOUT

The Question Time Challenge

Prize Money: £150,000

"Killer" Paxman — Newsnight's Mr Nasty

v.

"Deadbeat" Dimbleby — BBC's Mr Nice

Referee: Mr J. Birt

Following the retirement of top snoozeman, Pete "Switch-off" Sissons, his title is up for grabs. Watch the two titans battle it out!

Venue: Secret

Poetry Corner

Lines on the retirement of Mary Whitehouse and the passing of Anthony Burgess

So. Farewell
Then.

Mrs Whitehouse
And Anthony
Burgess.

TV campaigner
And polymath,
As Keith
Described you.
Once.

Burgess! You wrote
A Clockwork Orange.

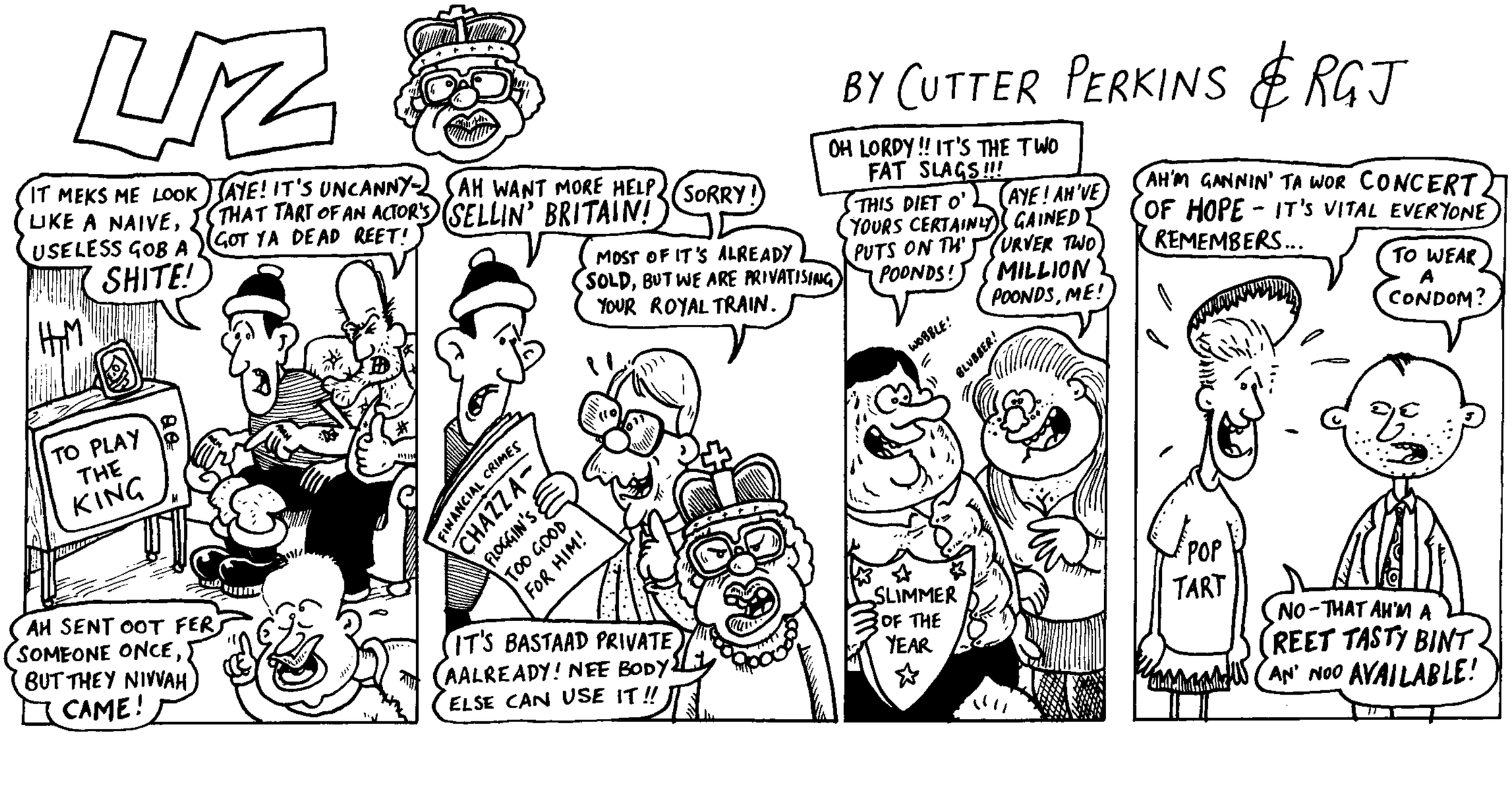
Mary! (May I
Call you that?)
You tried to
Ban it.

It is the
Poet's job
To notice
These things.

"Only connect"
As E.M.
Forster put
It.

E.J. Thribb (17½)

This poem is from E.J. Thribb's recent collection, "A Bonfire of Dead Leaves", and did not even make runner up in the Backward Poetry Prize. It appears courtesy of the *Independent*.


LUZ
BY CUTTER PERKINS & RGJ
IT MEKS ME LOOK LIKE A NAIVE, USELESS GOB A SHITE!
AYE! IT'S UNCANNY- THAT TART OF AN ACTOR'S GOT YA DEAD REET!
HM
TO PLAY THE KING
AH SENT OOT FER SOMEONE ONCE, BUT THEY NIVVAH CAME!
AH WANT MORE HELP SELLIN' BRITAIN!
SORRY!
MOST OF IT'S ALREADY SOLD, BUT WE ARE PRIVATISING YOUR ROYAL TRAIN.
FINANCIAL CRIMES
CHAZZA- FLOGGIN'S TOO GOOD FOR HIM!
IT'S BASTAAD PRIVATE AALREADY! NEE BODY ELSE CAN USE IT!!
OH LORDY!! IT'S THE TWO FAT SLAGS!!!
THIS DIET O' YOURS CERTAINLY PUTS ON TH' POONDS!
AYE! AH'VE GAINED URVER TWO MILLION POONDS, ME!
WOBBLE!
GLUBBER!
SLIMMER OF THE YEAR
AH'M GANNIN' TA WOR CONCERT OF HOPE - IT'S VITAL EVERYONE REMEMBERS...
TO WEAR A CONDOM?
POP TART
NO - THAT AH'M A REET TASTY BINT AN' NOO AVAILABLE!

HOUSE OF COMMONS
OFFICIAL REPORT

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

HANZ-Z-Z-ARD

The Triumphant Return of Mr Michael Heseltarzan, Westminster's Wittiest Man.

3.15 pm

Sir Bufton Tufton (Lymeswold, Con): May I, on behalf of this whole House, record our very deep pleasure in welcoming back the President of the Board of Trade, Sir Winston Heseltine? *[Prolonged cheering, chant of "For Hezza jolly good fellow"]*

Mr Robin Cook (Beard-under-Chin, Lab): Will the President kindly explain why all the coal mines he promised to reprieve are now being closed down?

Mr Heseltine (Westland, Con): With the honourable member, it always seems to be a case of "too many cooks spoiling the Labour Party". *[Hysterical laughter continues for several minutes, cries of "Hezza's back", "It's the way you tell 'em", and "You're so funny you'll give us a heart attack"]*

Mr Cook: I repeat the question — why is the coal industry being systematically murdered by this uncaring, hypocritical government?

Mr Heseltine: Who won the last election then? Once a Socialist, always a Socialist, that's what I say. If you lot were in, things would be even worse than they are. *[Explosion of laughter blows roof off Commons and continues for several hours]*

Mr Creepy Backbencher (Flattery, Con): Could the greatest prime minister of modern times please be kind enough to tell us what is in his diary?

John Major (Fifty-and-three-quarters, Con): I would refer the honourable member to page 94 of this magazine.

Mr Heseltine: And here's another one, folks. How many members of the Labour Party does it take to change a light bulb? *[Cries of "Answer, answer"]*

Mrs Betty Booproyd, Speaker: Will the President of the Board of Trade please answer his own question?

Mr Heselwit: The answer — wait for it — is none. Because the Labour Party never changes anything! *[Whole nation expires with mirth]*

From Sunday at 2.00
Anthony Hopkins in Printer's adaptation of Kafka's
THE TRAIL (15)
Cambridge Evening News

Man agents are DB Autos at Douglas, who I am sure will have a lot of good reasons why you chould choose this vehicle in preference to any of its competitors. The top-of-the-range TDX is priced at £16,895, plus postage and packing. *Manx Airlines Magazine*

101 USES FOR A JOHN MAJOR (24)

A HUNT DRAG

Those Italian Election Results in full

Oswalda Mosli: The new Mayor of Lazzio

Gazza Centro: Aldo Capitalista *(Keep Northern Italy Rich Party)* 78,307; Luciano Corrupti *(People's Party, formerly Democratic Mafia Party)* 0.

No change
(briefcase full of notes only)

Naples (and Die) South: Luigi Capo di Capi *(Cosa Nostra Christian Democrats)* 0; Signora Claudia Hitleri *(Nova Fascista Pizzeria)* 68,372.

Swing: from lamppost

EXCITING NEW FEATURE AS SEEN IN ALL NEWSPAPERS

WHY I ♥ MY
PRIVATE EYE

This week's £25 winning letter

"I am a keen cyclist and "Eye" always gives me the top news in the cycling world. Plus your daily "Kwik Recipe" slot is better than all the other newspapers. Keep it up!"

Kevin O'Bogus
Soho Square
London

The New Rocky Horror NATIVITY PLAY

For use in all schools at the end of December (formerly Christmas)

(Curtain rises to show Mary and Youssef arriving at the DSS offices)

Youssef: I want to register a complaint. My partner is pregnant and we have been denied accommodation because we are of Afro-Caribbean, Asian or other ethnic origin.

Official: Oh dear, that certainly sounds like one for the Commission for Racial Equality.

(The cast shall here sing the traditional carol: "O come all ye multi-faithful")

Official: But first we have a statutory obligation to provide you with board and lodging for the night. Could you just fill in these forms and then we have a happy ending to the story.

As the couple sign the forms, all shall sing:

"Away in a Mecca
Where Mohammed was born
Muslims are celebrating
This happy morn.
The same is true of Buddha
And Little Lord Krishna too
Not forgetting the Sikhs and Rastafarians,
They all have their own perfectly valid religious view."

(Enter sour-faced person of female orientation from the Play-Group Central Curriculum Co-ordinating Unit)

Female person: This is in direct contravention of all our guidelines. Why are Youssef and Mary of opposing gender? This is clearly an attempt to exclude single-sex parenting as an acceptable role model option for the Under-5s.

(Enter Holly and Ivy, from the Tufnell Park Lesbian Parent Teacher Action Committee. They sing "Santa Claus isn't coming to town. He's been banned")

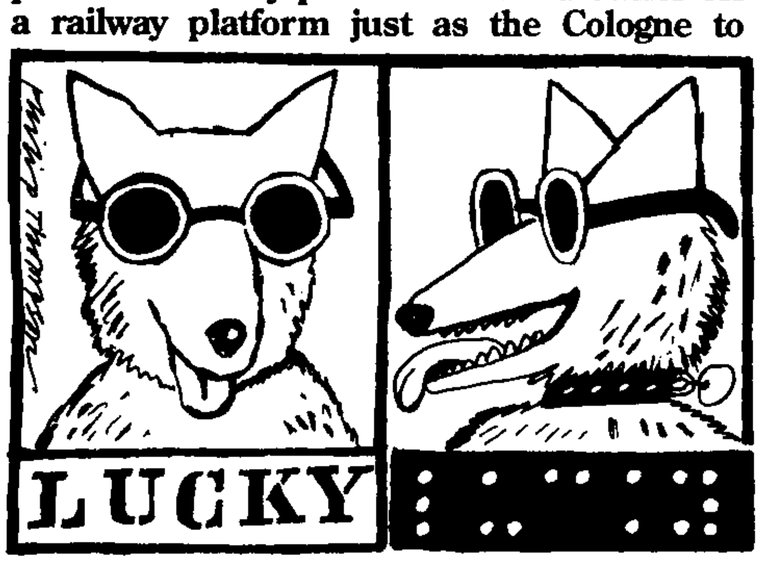
Curtain

FUNNY OLD WORLD

Compiled by Victor Lewis-Smith

• "We will not have him put down. Lucky is basically a damn good guide dog," Ernst Gerber, a dog trainer from Wuppertal told reporters. "He just needs a little brush-up on some elementary skills, that's all."

Gerber admitted to the press conference that Lucky, a German shepherd guide-dog for the blind, had so far been responsible for the deaths of all four of his previous owners. "I admit it's not an impressive record on paper. He led his first owner in front of a moving bus, and the second off the end of a pier. He actually pushed his third owner off a railway platform just as the Cologne to



Frankfurt express was approaching, and he walked his fourth owner into heavy traffic, before abandoning him and running away to safety. But, apart from the epileptic fits, he has a lovely temperament. And guide dogs are difficult to train these days."

Asked if Lucky's fifth owner would be told about his previous record, Gerber replied: "No. It would make them nervous, and that would make Lucky nervous. And when Lucky gets nervous, he's liable to do something silly." *(Europa Times, October 1993. Spotter — Terence Browne)*

— o —

• "What happened will haunt me for ever," Julius Mwinyi of the Seventh Day Adventist church told the Coroner's Court in Dar es Salaam. "One minute they were chanting 'Our faith in the Lord will sustain us,' next they had suddenly disappeared below the surface."

Mwinyi, 43, described the events leading up to the tragedy which was believed to have claimed eighteen lives. "We were all on a pilgrimage, setting out in a flotilla of canoes across Lake Victoria to a religious festival at Mwanza. We started singing hymns. However, some ruffians in a passing cruiser shouted obscenities at us, and suggested that we should all test our faith by walking on the water like Jesus. Our minister shouted back, telling them that he would do just that. Next thing, seventeen unfortunate souls stood up in their canoes cried out 'Allelujah', then joined hands with the minister and began chanting. Then they stepped out of their canoes and sunk like stones. The police spent three days recovering bodies, but never found them all. It's the crocodiles you see. I suppose crocodiles are God's creatures, but all the same I'd wipe them out. Anyway, my faith remains unshaken." *(San Francisco Chronicle, 27 October 1993. Spotter — Eric Page)*

— o —

• *"It's not every day you see a scrotum that size," recalled William A. Morton, a retired Pennsylvanian urologist. "It was twice the size of a melon, black and blue, and it stank. The patient told me that he'd injured himself a month earlier in the machine shop where he worked. I nearly passed out when he told me he 'knew enough about doctoring to close the wound with a heavy-duty stapling gun'. Later, I removed eight rusty one-inch staples from the scrotum, and reconnected the stump of his spermatic cord, although the left testis was missing.*

"After the operation, the patient broke down and confessed what had really happened. Apparently, he used to masturbate in his lunch hour by holding his penis against the canvas drive-belt of a machine, but had lost concentration one day and leaned too close to the belt. His scrotum had been caught between the pulley and the drive belt, and he ended up being thrown right across the workshop, and straight though a window. Too stunned to realise that he had lost a testicle, he stapled up the wound and resumed work.

"He assured me that he would abandon this method of self-gratification from now on, and buy a sex doll. Sorry, but I think he needs psychiatric help." (Medical Aspects of Human Sexuality, July 1991. Spotter — Paul Chambers)

CABINET IN SHOCK 'GAY' CLAIM

by Our Fairy Tale Staff
Hans Christian Clive Anderson

THE world of showbiz was left guessing when the entire cabinet claimed last night that "at least one member of the comedy duo Fry and Laurie is gay".

The cabinet refused to elaborate further, leaving everyone to speculate on whether it was Stephen Fry or not Hugh Laurie.

The cabinet claimed in its defence that it mixed with a lot of actors and comedians and that "everyone knew" at least one of the Fry and Laurie team was a confirmed heterosexual with a family. (*Shurely shome mishtake? — Ed.*)

The cabinet cited as proof the fact that a recent Labour Party political broadcast included the first recorded gay oral sex joke in such a transmission.

Fry: Blow me!

Laurie: The Tories never give any good jobs!

Fry: I thank you!

Laurie: My name's Julian, and this is Rupert.

(That's enough — Ed.)

THOMAS

THE PRIVATISED TANK ENGINE

Without a shadow of franchise

"TAKE my advice," said Gordon the Virgin Engine. "Hide Thomas in his engine shed."

"That won't solve anything," said the Fat Controller.

"Not to worry. At least 49 more companies are interested," said the Grey Controller. "This one, for example."

An excited businessman climbed out of a limousine. "Yes, I'd love to take on a franchise," he said. "I'II need these trains as a stopgap, because I've decided to electrify the line."

"Ahem," coughed the Fat Railman. "It's up to me which lines are to be electrified, or not as the case may be."

"Oh. Well in that case ..." said the businessman, turning to go.

"No, wait!" The Grey Controller seized his arm. "Just look at the quality of these trains."

The businessman frowned at Thomas, then brightened as he saw Gordon. "Yes. I'II buy this one and refurbish him."

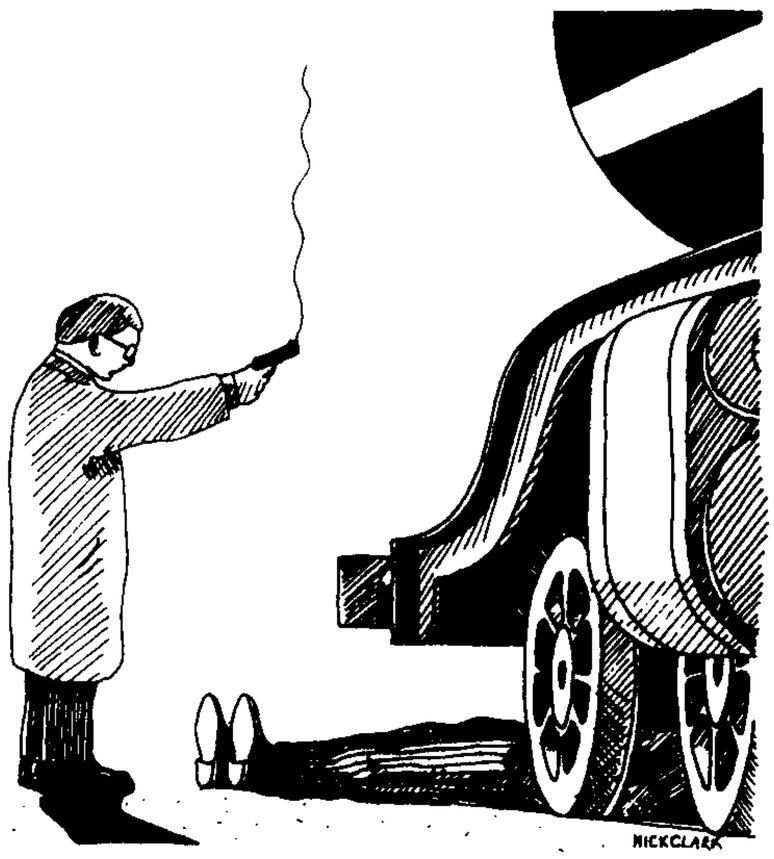
"Ahem," coughed Thomas. "You can't buy him or refurbish him, because we all belong to a leasing company, and they'll soon tell you how much you'll have to pay to hire us."

"This is nonsense! Now will you stop wasting my time!" Again he turned, but the Grey Controller held him back.

"A man of your considerable experience could bring improvements to this railway. You'd be so much better than the deeply inefficient Fat Controller here."

The businessman's frown melted. "Yes, I must admit I was planning some remarkable changes to the timetable."

"Ahem," coughed the Fat Regulator. "Only I can make remarkable changes to the timetables, thank you."



"Right, that's it. You can stuff your franchise!"

"Not so fast." The Grey Controller whipped out a pistol and held it to the businessman's temple. "You sign this document right now or I'II bust your brains. Oh yes."

"No way," said the businessman, tearing the paper to shreds. There was a bang and he fell to the floor.

"Bastard!" muttered the Grey Controller, making for his car.

"Two down, 48 more to go," said Thomas. "There's no cause for concern."

"I've had enough of your cheek," the Grey Controller quivered. "I shall impose costly new safety requirements on your line, oh yes."

Thomas turned white.

BULGER CASE

WHY OH WHY?

Why oh why oh why oh why oh why oh why oh why oh why oh why oh why oh why oh why oh why oh why oh why?

Oh why oh why oh why *(Will this do?)*

© *Exclusive to All Newspapers*

ON OTHER PAGES

● Why oh why? 7 ● Why oh why? 9

A Child Psychologist Writes

As a child psychologist I am often asked by newspapers: "Doctor, why did those boys kill another child?"

The simple answer is that I haven't a clue and nor has anyone else.

It may have something to do with the nature of evil but we don't believe in that nowadays so I always reply: "I'll fax you through 1,200 words about social

deprivation, single parents, truancy, child abuse and that sort of thing."

If you are worried about children murdering each other, don't expect me to help.

© *A. Doctor*

As heard on R4's Thought for the Day!!

J.C. Flannel, Team Leader of the Church of the Immaculately Correct.

Many of us you know who have been listening to the news and reading the daily papers have in a very real sense been both moved and disturbed by the very tragic events in Liverpool earlier this year. Many Christians and I don't of course include myself in that are trying to come to terms with the problem of what to say when confronted with a radio microphone and four minutes to fill up. Usually as a qualified and experienced media cleric my job is to talk on government economic policy, issues such as Maastricht, Gatt, inner city renewal and so forth. I tend to leave moral issues, that is to say judgements about what constitutes concepts of right and wrong, to politicians who are so much better equipped to make such pronouncements than a humble man of God. And now I can see the producer waving at me to tell me my time is up. And isn't that true of all of us. That our time is eventually up. And now last night's football results...

U-TURNER PRIZE

Results in Full

by **Brian R. Sewell**

Winner

J. Major for "Concrete House of Commons". A conceptual piece devoid of any meaning. Major's work is entirely empty of content and poorly executed. An obvious winner.

Runner-up

M. Heseltine for "Neon Coal". 8 tons of coal from the last pit in Britain is laid out on the floor. The work is conceptual and makes no sense at all. The subject has been poorly handled from start to finish. After the exhibition the coal will be thrown away because according to the artist it is "too expensive to burn".

Commended

J. MacGregor, "BR Sell Off". Poorly executed conceptual work

(continued p.94)

LATE NEWS

The Turnip Prize was awarded to Mr G. Taylor for his abstract concept "The England Team".

A HOTEL apartment complex in Protaras has been advising guests who do not want to be disturbed by the cleaners early in the morning, "to hang the *Do not disturb* sign provided, on your knob". *Cyprus Mail*

Great Bores Of Today.

"... it's completely unbelievable of course the Prime Minister is supposed to have murdered this girl and the King looks nothing like Charles and he keeps sending out for prostitutes which is ludicrous but that scene was brilliant wasn't it? where whatshisname confronts Charles and they argue over his speech about the homeless it's incredible and that bit at Chequers where they announce the election but it's only a rumour and they all know it's a rumour that's just what it's like and when he talks to camera that's just silly he wouldn't do that in real life obviously and the Diana character when she's middle-aged and in the bath and that man comes in with a loofah and then the other men are listening in the car it's ridiculous although the Squidgie tape was never explained was it? and it could have been MI5 and that gay equerry he was brilliant too the way he played that part and he said "your secret's safe with me" it's real rubbish I missed the first one but a friend of mine has got it on video..."

The Secret Diary of John Major aged 47¾

Monday

I am continuing my historic campaign to get Back to Basics. This is entirely my idea which I am working on with Miss Hogg, Mr Waldegrave and my new press adviser Mr Meyer. We have all agreed that we are in favour of the following things:

1. An end to crime.

2. Teaching children the difference between right and wrong.

3. A nationwide campaign to inform the public about the importance of 1 and 2 above.

4. A Back to Basics Charter.

5. A Basics Hotline on which anyone with more suggestions for items can ring up Mr Waldegrave.

This is only a starting point. But to have five points after only a week is a magnificent achievement. Let there be no doubt that it most certainly is. Oh yes.

Tuesday

Everyone is looking forward to the Budget. We used to have it in the spring but my ex-friend Norma Lamont changed it to just before Christmas. When I asked him why, he waved his Threshers plastic bag and winked at me. "Because everyone drinks a lot at Christmas and so it is the perfect time to put taxes up."

I had to explain this to Mr Clarke who does Norma's job now, but he did not seem to get the point. "If you ask me," he said, "it is a bloody silly time to have a budget because all it does is create maximum uncertainty at the one time of year when people might spend some money." I'm afraid Mr Clarke is not as brilliant as everyone keeps saying.

I asked him what was going to be in his budget and he said it was a secret. "You will just have to wait and see. But I'll tell you one thing — we're running out of things to put VAT on."

It was then that I had one of my not inconsiderably brilliant ideas — the sort of lateral thinking that has put me where I am today! I will hesitate no further and tell you what that idea was. "Well, Mr Clarke," I said, "why don't we put VAT on VAT?" He looked quite astonished, and it was clear that the idea had never even occurred to him.

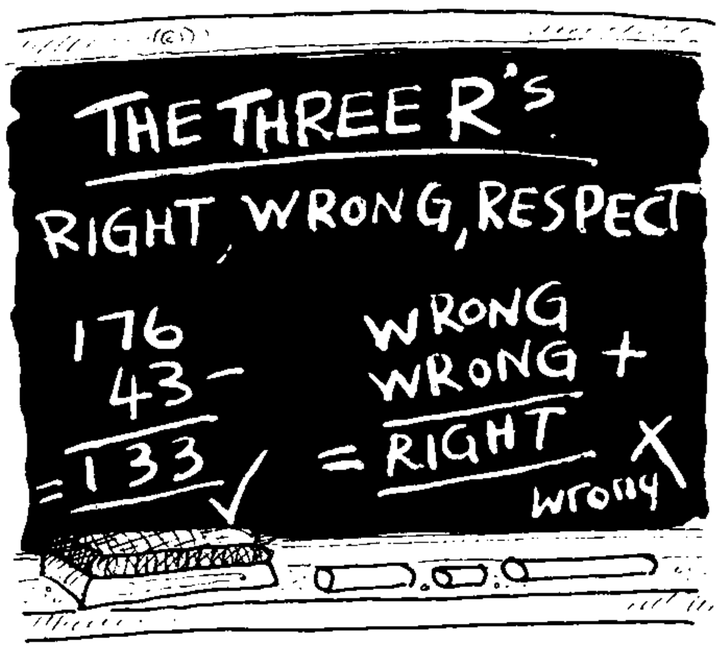
Wednesday

I was sitting in my office this morning, using the new pencil sharpener I was sent by Eurotunnel. It is in the shape of a tunnel with a French flag at one end and the British flag at the other. You put the pencil in at the French end and nothing happens. I was just about to ask Mr Waldegrave to send it back, when the door flew open and my brother Terry came in, wearing a baseball cap the wrong way round.

"Yo, dude," he shouted, "give me five." I must admit to being in no small measure puzzled. "John," he said, "I've been to the Big Apple. It's really far out, oh yeah." The thought crossed my mind that he must be a big apple short of a picnic, but I did not put him in my Loonies book because he is my brother.

Thursday

Today we all went to parliament for the Queen's Speech. This is the kind of occasion that shows Britain at its best, like cricket matches, drinking lager in the pub and going off for a curry after evensong. The highlight is when a man called Black Rod bangs on the door with his stick and tells us that the Queen is ready to tell us her ideas for the next parliament. Then there is a procession, just like at a wedding, with me and Mr Smith at the front like the bride and groom, and Mr Hurd looking like the bride's father.



As usual the Queen was most interesting indeed, and I was particularly pleased that she chose as her main theme the idea of "Back to Basics", although she did not seem to have much idea what it was about. She also said that her government would be abolishing a lot of regulations on businesses. I whispered to Mr Hurd, "Aren't these the regulations that we brought in?" For some reason he kicked me very hard in the shins.

Friday

When our cabinet meeting started today everyone was reading the newspapers. Mr Portfolio held up a headline which read "He's Gone At Last — England Supremo Quits After Humiliating Run Of Failure". "It's alright," he explained, with one of his funny twisted smiles, "it's only the football they are talking about."

"I know it is," I said. "I am not a complete idiot."

"Quite right," said Mr Clarke. "You're not a *complete* idiot."

Everyone laughed because Mr Portfolio had rather made a fool of himself. Just then Mr Waldegrave came in with the coffee and an empty tray. "Haven't you forgotten something?" I asked, indicating the absence of our usual biscuits.

"Mrs Bottomley's orders — part of her new drive to abolish fatness."

"Is this true?" I asked the Health Secretary in a stern voice.

"Yes, prime minister," she explained. "Obesity-related diseases are costing the Health Service £25.7 billion a year, which would be much better spent on hiring more managers to make the health service more cost-effective."

There was a long silence and then Mr Lilley asked what had happened to my historic plan to bring peace to Northern Ireland. "Let no one doubt," I told them all, "that it has been a great success, but I have now drawn a line under it, because we have to get back to basics."

Saturday

I was not inconsiderably upset to discover that I am having secret talks with the IRA. Especially when I said I would never have talks with them!

Mr Mayhew, who is a lawyer as well as being in charge of Northern Ireland, had a very clever answer to this.

"You are not talking to Gerry Adams," he said. "You are talking to an actor reading out his words."

"I thought I was talking to you," I replied, but he did not seem to hear me.

Later Mr Meyer came to see me about what I should say if anyone accused me of doing a U-turn.

"You said that your stomach turns at the thought of talks with the IRA."

"Yes," I said, following him closely with my notebook and biro at the ready. "Well, you can still have talks even though your stomach is turning. You see."

He is a very clever man, let there be no doubting this. No wonder I employed him when Mr Hurd told me to give him Mr O'Donnell's job.

Sunday

At last a victory for this country! The England Rugby team have defeated the mighty All Blacks, who are from New Zealand (one of the furthest countries away on my Daily Telegraph Wall Map).

I was watching the game on TV yesterday with a one-pack Asda Lo-Cal Shandy when my wife Norman came in and said: "Why are they called the All-Blacks when they are mostly white?"

"It's obvious," I said. "I will tell you later when I have had a word with Mr Hurd."

Women do not understand sport any more than politics.

● THE SECOND SECRET DIARY OF JOIIN MAJOR — *the book and sequel to last year's no. 1 best-seller — is now out. £4.99. Don't miss it!*

KENNEDY ANNIVERSARY — MILLIONS WEEP

by Our Man On The Grassy Knoll **Lee Harvey Proctor**

LARGE sections of the population yesterday wept openly with boredom as they remembered that it was exactly a week since all the Kennedy programmes were shown on television.

No one will forget what they were doing when the news came through that the Kennedy Assassination Evening had been scheduled for that terrible day in November.

"I was at home reading the *Radio Times*," said retired author Mr J.F.K. Hartley, "and I just couldn't believe it. I immediately went out to the video shop where all my neighbours had congregated in a state of panic. We all started hiring Madonna's *Body of Evidence* and Mel Gibson's *Forever Young*. We were that desolate."

Just why the shocking programmes were put on at all remains a mystery, with many conflicting theories circulating amongst experts. Some claim that a lone man, operating from a position high up in Broadcasting House, took the decision himself to inflict the fatally boring programmes on the public.

Kennedy Overkilled

Others say the man was merely acting as the stooge for a more sinister conspiracy involving the BBC, ITV and C4, who all had a vested interest in the deadly anniversary.

However most commentators are agreed that, behind the killing of a lot of time on television that day, there must have been an explanation more convincing than simply not having any other programmes to put on.

J.F.K. Birt is 57.

WHO KILLED JFK? Shock New Theory

by Our Kennedy Staff **Jack Ruby-Wax**

A STARTLING new theory to explain the 30-year-old riddle of who killed President Kennedy on that fateful August day in 1962 has set America on its ear.

In his book, *Who Killed JFK — At Last The Truth*, Professor Karl J. Pipesucker of the University of New Dworkin points the finger at a lone former marine and Communist sympathiser, Lee Harvey Oswald.

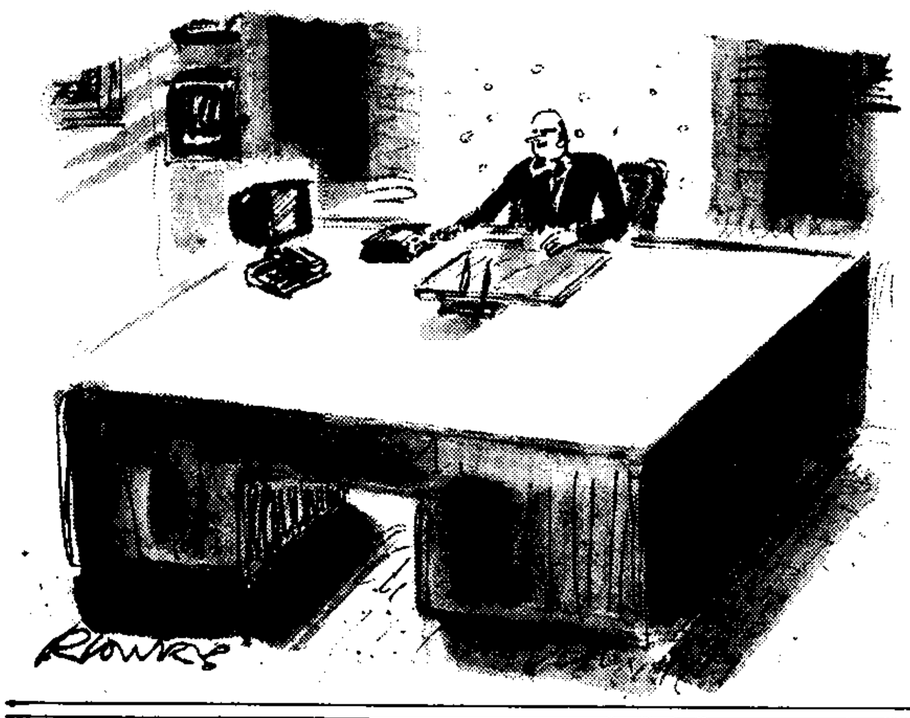
Warren Piece

Using a mass of new material obtained under the Freedom of Information Act from the Warren Report, Pipesucker painstakingly reconstructs the fateful hours surrounding what was to become the greatest enigma of all time.

Over the past 30 years, more than two million theories have been advanced to explain the Kennedy assassination, in order to make money (*surely 'in order to unravel the mystery'? — Ed.*)

Most recently it has been suggested that Kennedy shot himself, after his advances were rejected by Marilyn Monroe.

But Pipesucker cuts through the maze of speculation and shows that there was no conspiracy, and that only one man, Lee Harvey Oswald, fired the fateful bullet that was to *(contd. p.94)*



"I'd like my coffee black and my Christmas white, please, Miss Stackwell"

Mum's Army

The award-winning comedy series that won the Golden Turkey Prize at this year's Neasden Festival.

(Theme music. Song: "Who do you think you're kidding, Mr Patten?". Cut to scene of primary school at Warminster-on-Sea.)

Headmaster: Oh no! We haven't got any teachers. What on earth can we do? I know...

(Shot of telephone ringing. It is answered by posturing nincompoop in glasses.)

Captain Majoring *(for it is he):* Oh yes. It's all under control. The core curriculum's quite safe. I've got plenty of teachers. We're on our way.

(He turns to his second-in-command, a diffident public school twit in an ill-fitting uniform)

Sergeant Hurdson: Well, if I may venture to say, Sir, there is a slight problem. We don't actually have any teachers at the moment. They all went in the last round of cuts.

Majoring: That's typical of you, Hurdson. Always the wet blanket.

(Enter "Spivvy" Patten)

Patten: Don't you worry, Mr Majoring, sir. I can do you some lovely teachers, half-price mums, working from home. No training, no questions asked, won't cost you a penny.

Majoring: There, Hurdson, you see — a man who can think for himself. Carry on, Patten.

(Cut back to schoolroom where headmaster is still waiting for his new staff to turn up. Telephone rings)

Mystery voice *(Patten, for it is he):* Sorry, it's all off. The Mum's Army idea fell through.

(Cut back to Captain Majoring)

Majoring: I never thought much of the idea in the first place. It's all your fault, Hurdson.

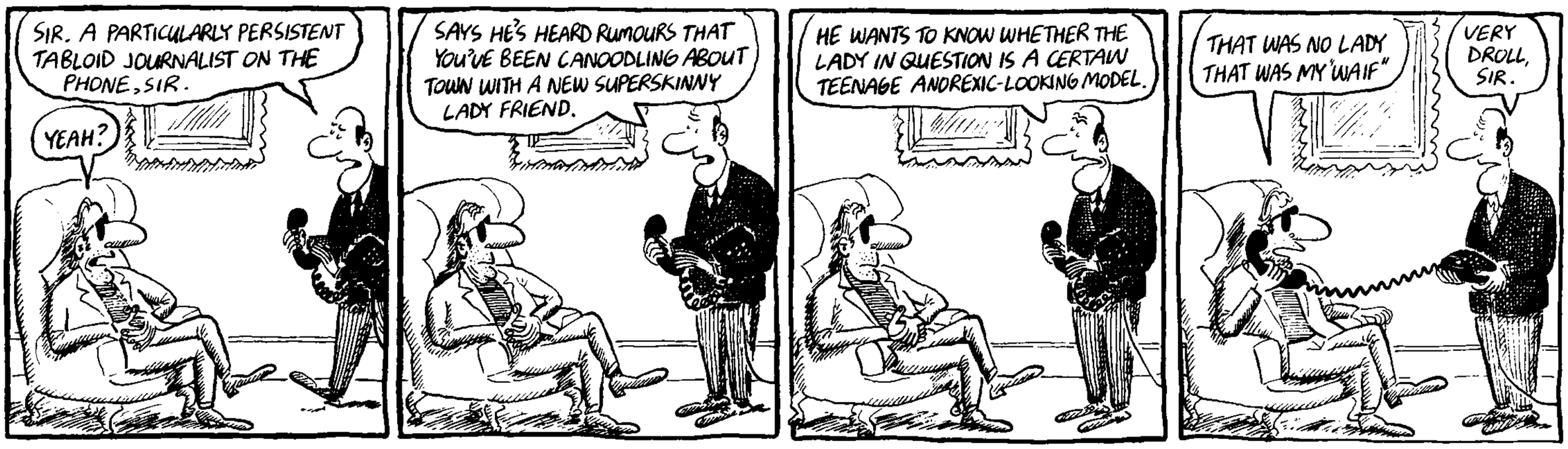
Lance-Corporal Portillo: But it would have saved money!

Majoring: You stupid boy.

(Credits and theme music: "Who do you think you're kidding, Hitler Hastings, if you think the Daily Telegraph's any good?")

Celeb

LIGGER


SIR. A PARTICULARLY PERSISTENT TABLOID JOURNALIST ON THE PHONE, SIR.
YEAH?
SAYS HE'S HEARD RUMOURS THAT YOU'VE BEEN CANOODLING ABOUT TOWN WITH A NEW SUPERSKINNY LADY FRIEND.
HE WANTS TO KNOW WHETHER THE LADY IN QUESTION IS A CERTAIN TEENAGE ANOREXIC-LOOKING MODEL.
THAT WAS NO LADY THAT WAS MY "WAIF"
VERY DROLL, SIR.

● *Keep your date with the 1994* **PRIVATE EYE ROYAL CALENDAR.** *In the shops now — £4.99.*

A SILVIE KRIN SPECIAL

TO PLAY THE FOOL

THE STORY SO FAR: Charles is spending the long winter nights watching a new television series.

Now read on...

"IT REALLY is appalling." The actor playing the King of England was talking to his prime minister about the proposed redevelopment of Victoria Street.

Charles was sitting alone in the Lycett Green drawing room at Highgrove, staring at his new 42in Haritomsun quadraphonic TV screen, a present from the Crown Prince of Sinatra in recognition of the good work he had done in arranging the sale of two Budgie anti-personnel helicopters.

Charles still felt strange sitting there on his own — the shelves now empty of Diana's beloved videos, the vacant space over the mantelpiece where once had hung the signed photo of her and Phil Collins. Was that his name? How long ago it all seemed — a world now irrevocably lost.

As he sat there in the darkened room the words of his old friend and mentor Sir Laurens van der Post came back to comfort him. "Time, my boy, is a great healer," as he had once said to him by the campfire, in the great Redhead Forests of the Kalahari. How very true that was, Charles mused, and how very untrue this silly play was.

Now there was a scene of the King striding along a gravel path at Buckingham Palace talking to the prime minister in a silly voice.

"You see, what I want is a sort of, er, role thingie. There's so much to be done. You know, the inner cities, the environment, er, Shakespeare, that sort of thing."

"Quite so," the prime minister was replying. "But it wouldn't do, Your Majesty, to be too controversial. I'll see what I can do."

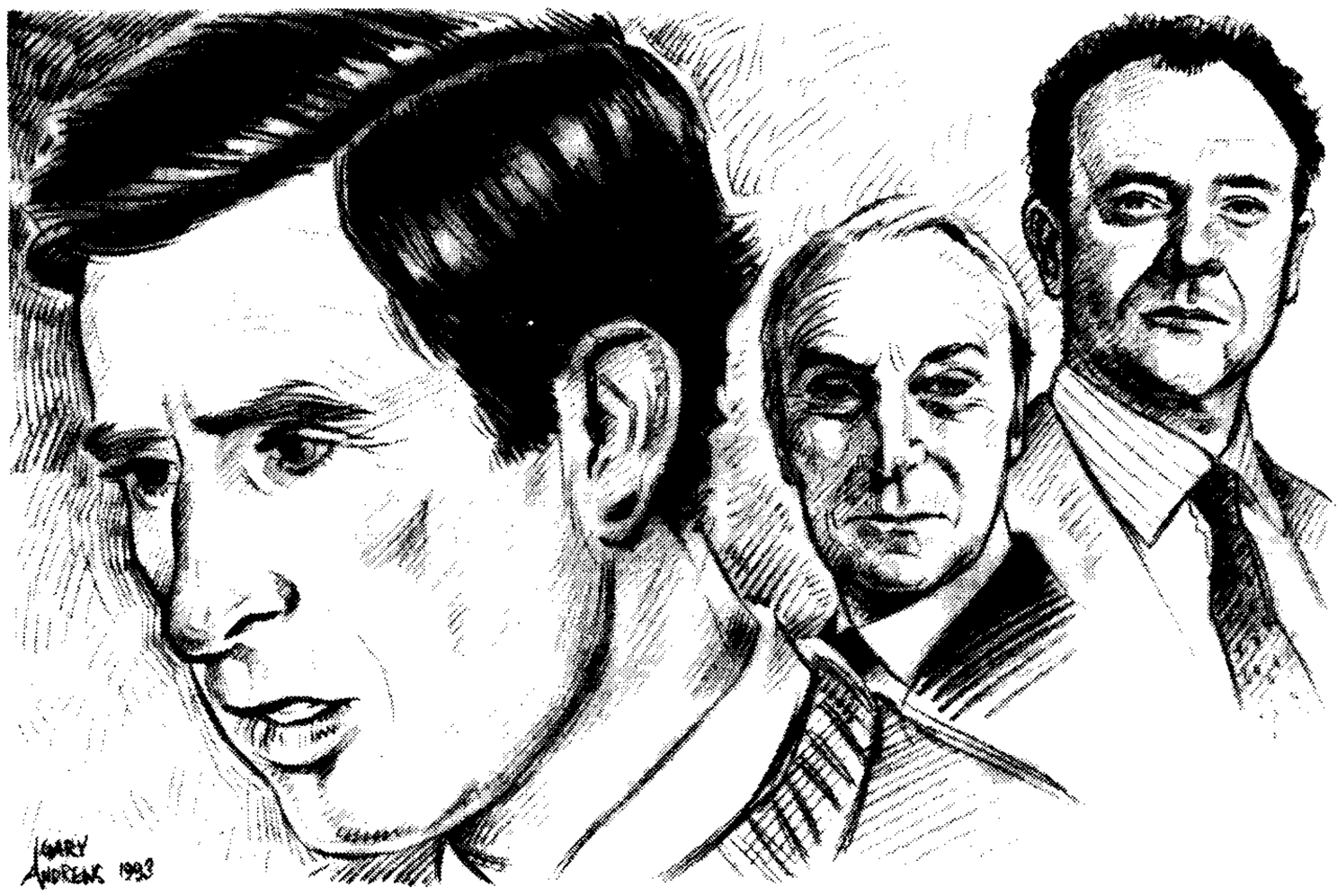
Charles was getting impatient. Why could these television chaps never get anything right?

"I mean, that fellow could never be King," he exclaimed, "with his ridiculous voice and absurd mannerisms. No one could take him seriously. He'd be a laughing stock."

Charles looked back at the screen. Now the King was sitting in a sauna bath while his attractive young ethnic affairs adviser Miss Fatima Wandulu told him what he should say at the Annual Banquet of the Worshipful Company of Moneylenders and Usurers.

"You must tell them, Sire, to launch a new multi-cultural awareness programme inside Britain's major corporations."

"Yes, yes," said the actor playing the King, as he dried himself with a towel. "It's like my old friend and mentor sir Clarence van der Valk always says: 'People who need people are the luckiest people in the world.' "



Charles leaped to his feet and called for Sir Alan Fitztightly. "Turn this rubbish off, will you!" he demanded, and immediately the pink-cardiganed figure of his equerry shimmered from the darkness and, with one deft movement of the remote control, the screen went silent.

"There you are, my dear. Are you sure you didn't want to watch the snooker on the other side?"

"No." Charles grimaced. "I've seen enough television. It really is appalling..."

"IT REALLY is appalling." Charles was striding purposefully along the gravel path in the gardens of Buckingham Palace. In the distance he could see the famous fountain by Alessandro Mussolini, The Triumph of Fascism, which his great-uncle the Duke of Windsor, had been given on his visit to the Vatican in 1929.

The grey-suited figure of the prime minister at his side struggled to keep up.

"Oh yes," he agreed. "What exactly was it, sir, that was appalling?"

Charles turned to John Major and explained patiently, his features creasing in exasperation.

"You see, I haven't got a proper role. I feel I could contribute so much more than I do. It's all very well these inner cities and environment thingies — but I really should be getting involved at the sharp end, you know, business, exports, that kind of thing."

"Quite so," coughed the deferential prime minister. "But with respect, sir, you must consider your constitutional position. And what would your mother say?"

"That's alright, she's dead," Charles replied in a dreamy voice.

The prime minister reeled back in shock.

"What's that, sir? Are you sure?"

Charles snapped out of his momentary reverie with a sense of profound embarrassment.

"Oh dear," he said, "I must have been thinking about something else. I'm very jetlagged. I've been in Kuwait selling all these exports. Flying the flag. Very tiring."

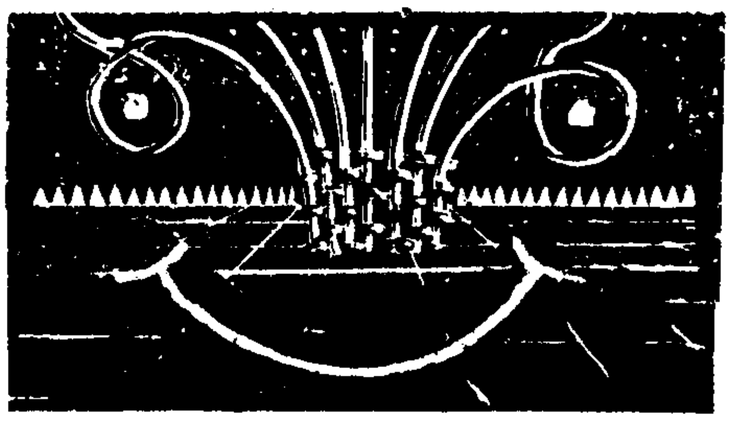
Charles was interrupted by his new adviser on Multi-Environmental issues, Wanda Sarfraz.

"I'm sorry to interrupt you, sir," said the attractive young Asian girl, as she caught up with the two men next to a large bed of winter-flowering Camillas, "but we really have got to finish that speech you're giving in the City tonight to the Worshipful Company of Offshoremen and Tax Avoiders. I thought you could say something about the new initiative for multi-..."

Charles suddenly felt overcome by an extraordinary sense of deja-vu. What was it that the old Indian sage Shri Hari Sikkom had said? "Life repeats itself, first as a rotten old TV play, then as reality itself." No, that couldn't be it.

A skein of Canada Dry geese flew overhead, on their way to their winter breeding ground at Canary Wharf. They screamed demonically.

DIARY



PAUL JOHNSON

Another pillar of society has fallen with a sickening thud, and Britain continues to crumble. Have you noticed, as I have, how many so-called "shoe shops" are riddling the High Streets the length and breadth of this once-great country of ours?

You may think there is nothing suspicious in that. People, you may think, need shoes to wear on their feet (or in my case, their hands: a stout walking-shoe makes a first-rate glove). But this does not account for the massive proliferation of shoe-shops, on a scale greater than at any time this century. The truth is more sinister.

They are everywhere. Often, when I visit a shop and ask for, say, half a pound of fresh groceries, the reply comes back, "Sorry, sir, but this is a shoe shop." I stand my corner, demanding to know why there are not fresh green beans and some nice juicy apples on the shelves. But their lips remain sealed. They have no wish to betray their real purpose.

For Britain is in the vice-like grip of a sinister shoe shop conspiracy to undermine the very heart of traditional British family life.

Black or brown? Lace-up or slip-on? Rubber sole or leather? Boot or shoe? Buckled or plain? Such are the questions fired ceaselessly at the innocent British shopper. It is crystal clear to all sensible people that the sole intention in asking these divisive questions is to create an irreparable rift in the once-cheery British homestead.

Why this evil? The reason is simple. Shoe shops have a vested interest in the breakdown of the traditional family. For them, every shoe shared is a sale lost. Every satisfied customer is a customer who won't wish to make a further purchase. It follows that they have every reason to promote discontent and division.

I have asked Police Chiefs to look into the matter. I have privately urged senior politicians to rush through the appropriate legislation to crack down on this shoe shop plague. If they do not heed my call for the banning of all new shoes, I fear for the future.

And our grandchildren will not lightly forgive us.

The recent spate of wet weather has done much to renew my faith in Britain, for there is no other country in the world where the mud, caressed by rain and snow, is so richly abundant.

I often inform newspaper proprietors, Cabinet Ministers, heads of industry and the like that there is nothing the average Briton likes more than donning his Wellingtons and wallowing around in the first decent pat of mud he can find. I then urge them to give good, decent British mud a higher profile, for sensible people like you and I value it above all else.

It is high time, for instance, that there was a National Museum of Mud, mud-based University courses and an energetic Minister of Mud — preferably a woman, for they are much better at these things. But the present Government, filled as it is by a motley collection of "progressives", will not listen. No fear of that. They have lost contact with the needs of the ordinary people of this country, for whom coming back after a hard day's honest work to sink into a warm bath of mud is the very stuff of life. They must act, and act soon.

However much the eggheads may try to tell us otherwise, ordinary members of the public know that Britain is rotten from top to bottom. Most people would agree that "progressive" judges are a menace to society. Only last week, I read of a man who had been found "not guilty" by a jury and had been let loose on society, no doubt to be found "not guilty" at a later date on some other charge.

Ordinary people agree that the risible option of the pernicious "not guilty" verdict has had its day. As I parade the streets of the once-great city of London, I am forever catching sight of miscreants of every shape and hue, walking around any-old-how as free as birds. "Not guilty?" Not a chance. Some of them quite openly wear jeans; others have learnt that they can brazenly flout the need to shave and get away with it; still others stride about laughing and talking, taunting ordinary, decent people who might wish they remain silent. Yet the great British bobby has had his wings clipped by a lax judiciary. He now has no power whatsoever to arrest these scruffs and jabbermouths and bung them into prison. Of course, it is widely known that most judges have themselves been engaged in murder, rape and pillage at some time in their lives, and, as Beaverbrook himself always used to say to me when begging me for my advice, "They know which side their bread is buttered."

I cannot remember a time when life in Britain for the vast majority of ordinary people has been better. Milkmen whistle merry tunes. Newspaper vendors are doing a roaring trade. The sun shines, even in winter. Christmas cards are sent to loved ones. And among the working-classes, neighbours stride cheerily from door to door ladelling first-class stews of nutritious scraps into one another's mouths.

Yet still, even after thirty long years in the wilderness, the Labour Party seeks to whip up discontent. "Some people are cold," they whine. "Others are hungry. And others ill."

But the British people will not be brainwashed that easily. It is only a few years since Labour was in power, and we remember only too well what it was like. There was no central heating. We had only crusts to eat. Milkmen were banned from whistling. Senior citizens were castrated in the streets. Arthur Scargill was given the run of Buckingham Palace. Christmas cards were burnt by social workers. Those who were not afraid of hard work, thrift and honesty were shamelessly kicked to death by the French.

Is this really the sort of country we wish to return to? Let us not sleepwalk our way to disaster. Mr Major must take a grip and outlaw the Labour Party for once and for all.

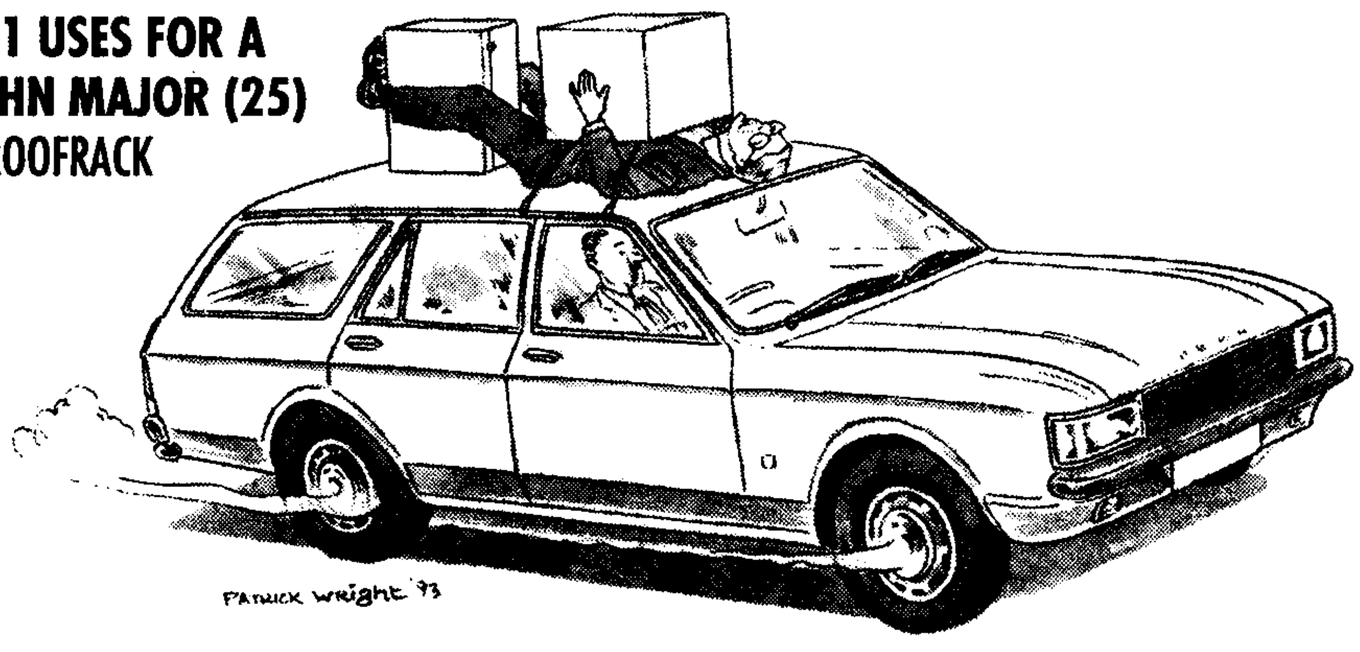
What on earth is happening to Britain? I have no time for the so-called "shower unit" which, for some reason, is plugged into the wall above the bath in every hotel one visits these days.

My objection to them lies in the simple fact that they do not work. Presumably their function is as a convenient telephone extension. Thus when the phone rings in the bedroom and one is in the bathroom, one is expected to reach for the "shower unit", to press it against one's ear, to turn the lever and then to conduct one's conversation.

But all one gets is an earful of water.

I have mentioned my objections to senior ministers, but so far they have done precisely nothing. Small wonder that British tourism is in such a rotten state if all our visitors are treated to soaking wet earholes whenever they wish to get in touch with their traditional families. The whole of history, recent and ancient, proves that way-out ideas like the "shower unit" cannot work. There is only one solution. We must give all shower-unit manufacturers a bloody nose and send them packing until they choose to honour the Ten Commandments.

101 USES FOR A JOHN MAJOR (25)
A ROOFRACK



Monarch inflight magazine

Literary Review

Tripe and onions

The Forward Book of Poetry 1994

(Forward Publishing, £5.95)

HERE'S a turn up. For years now the bright young sparks on the books pages have been saying that the current British novel is nbg. No memorable characters, no gripping stories, all that — whack, whack, whack, good fun really.

But it became a bit monotonous, knocking down these knackered novelists. To their surprise the reviewers found that it would be nice to have something to praise after all, if only to make the whackings look more selective. They hankered for the old-fashioned politesse of saying: "What I mean is, your book's crap in comparison to *this* one."

Then Harry Ritchie — the brave boy who became literary editor at the *Sunday Times* after everybody else, from Martin Amis to Normski, had turned it down — had an idea. He'd say that, yeah, the novel's bollocks but poetry is brilliant. This had the inestimable advantage that hardly anybody can bear to read modern poetry, so nobody would contradict him.

And they haven't. Every dorkbrain now goes around saying, "There's an exhilarating renaissance in contemporary British verse." The *Independent* prints a "Daily Poem" to make its remaining readers feel even more superior, and the *Guardian* has duly followed suit.

And poetry has got a prize too. A Medici wannabee called William Sieghart, who runs a company that produces in-house business magazines, saw an Opening. All he needed to do was set up a poetry prize and in no time people would be calling it "the bardic Booker" (wordsmith: John Walsh).

It's worked a treat. Poetry is perfect for promotion because so little reading is required. The main difference nowadays between poetry and prose is that, dreadful though it is, poetry doesn't go on for nearly so long.

And is it cheap! Unlike articles by journalists, poems hardly cost a thing. Remember, many people actually *pay* to publish their poems.

So here we have the second great *Forward Book of Poetry*. Unlike the first, it has been competently edited. As well as the prize-winners (Carol Ann Duffy, £10,000 for best book; Don Paterson, £5,000 for best first book; Vicki Feaver, £1,000 for best single poem), there are 80 more poems, all previously published, selected from books and magazines by a panel of five judges. It really is a representative selection of contemporary poetry, a judiciously taken soil sample.

That's why it makes such painful reading. It would have been nice to have believed in a renaissance of *something* — macramé, treen, sherry trifles, it hardly matters what — but no luck. An hour with this book and you're disabused. These poems turn out to have that frightful silliness, that sprightly fatuity, which stops almost everybody but poets from reading poetry after adolescence.

To make a poem of the year, you need less wit than an alternative comedian, less invention than a mediocre hack. Carol Ann Duffy's "Valentine" is a pretty good example. "Not a red rose or a satin heart. / I bring you an onion" it begins.

Well, well, what a card, eh? An *onion*. Whatever next? Being a dogged poet, she tells us, laboriously working out the ways in which the jolly old onion makes a first-rate valentine. "It will blind you with tears / like a lover", you see. Only if you chop it small, of course, but never mind. Then, should you proceed to snack on it raw, there's yet another way in which it makes a spiffy token of love. "I give you an onion. / Its fierce kiss will stay on your lips, / possessive and faithful / as we are, / for as long as we are." Pooh! What's more it'll repeat on you something rotten too, I bet (but maybe that's not poetry?).

And at the end, this talented vegetable even supplies a little touch of melodrama. "Lethal. / Its scent will cling to your fingers, / cling to your knife." Knife, eh? A dark undertone there, if I'm not mistaken. Now that's poetry, that is.

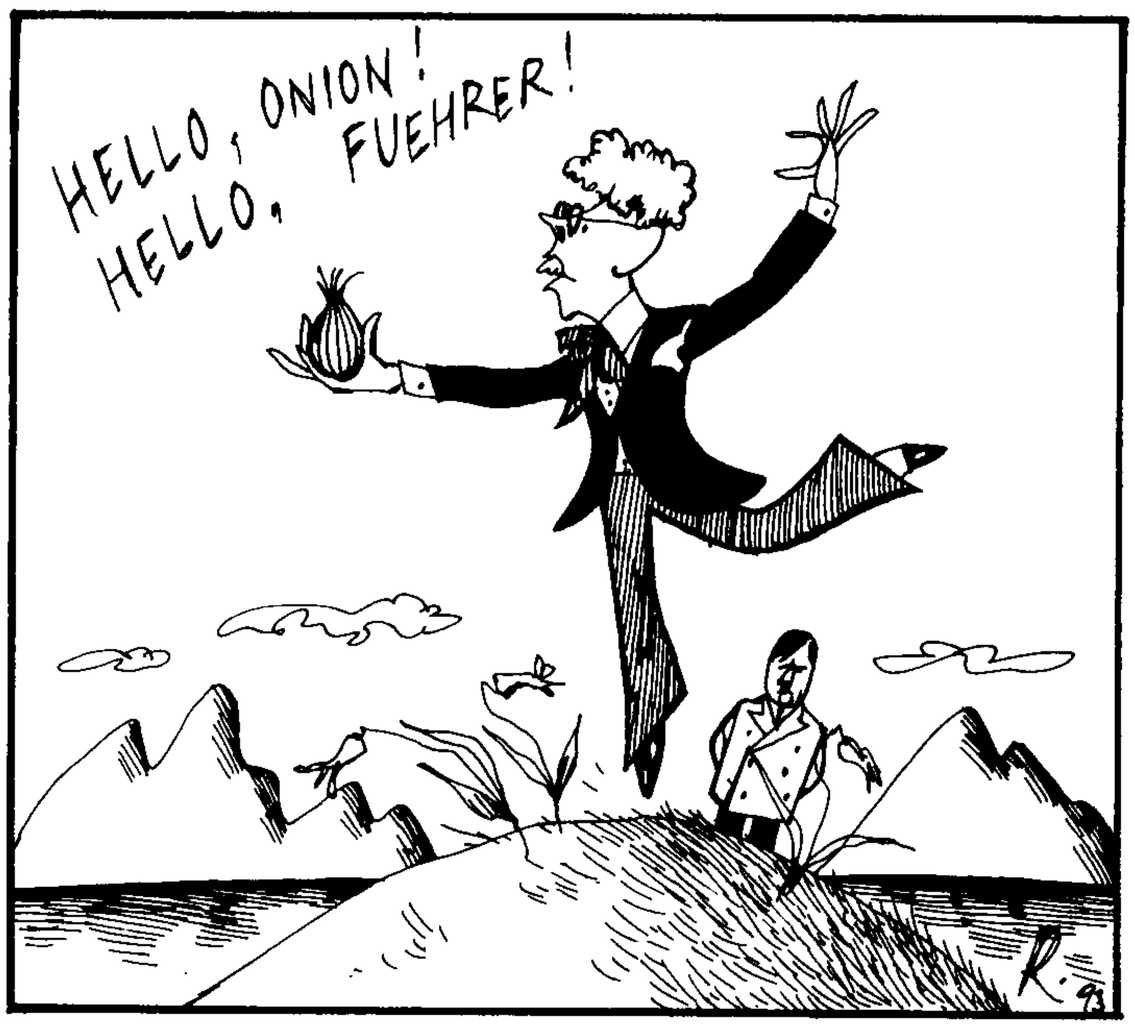
Were some stand-up to deliver himself of this *jeu d'esprit*, or somebody you know to discourse thus on the romantic symbolism of root vegetables over the breakfast table, you would not, in all likelihood, be much impressed. But set it out as verse with only a few words per line and suddenly it's art.

Everything awful you remembered about poetry is richly represented here. There are those dreadful poems about being a poet ("I was my own poem," says another of the Duffys). There's even one about being a poet who wins a poetry competition.

There are atrociously forced findings of significance (one nerd constructs a poem out of the resemblance between a kettle descaler, or "de-furrer", and Adolf Hitler, "Der Führer"). There are those poems that make up their own daft rules (one has only words of one syllable, another consists of lists of three things). There are those that are spoken by unconventional narrators, like photographs taken from unusual angles (one is spoken by an unhappy lettuce marooned in a fridge).

There are dreadfully winsome comparisons — "You're numb as hair, / as mute as cats, / as soft as lettuces...". There are excruciating rhymes you can see coming from a mile away ("celery/salary", "conkers/bonkers"). There are poncey words (falchion, mussitate, cordillera). There are preening poeticisms ("silvery plenitude", "civil urgencies of sweet desire", "grey visitant in fish-vigil" — that's a heron, by the way).

And then there are those crowning statements at the end of poems about the meaning of life, which poets having got thus far generally feel entitled to deliver to us. Perhaps the best here is by somebody called Mark Robinson. "The world is hard but worth it," he advises. It's certainly more than you can say of the *Forward Book of Poetry*.



BOOKS & BOOKMEN

■ CLARE "The Queen" Alexander, managing director of Viking, has commissioned yet another royal book, this time from Lynn "The Demon" Barber, although thankfully it won't be published for a couple of years.

One would think that Alexander would have been chastened by the appalling sales of *Daily Mirror* royal hack James Whitaker's drivelish tome for Viking. Echoing Brian Hanrahan's famous Falklands War wordbite, she remarked of the 150,000 copies that Viking printed: "I counted them out and I counted them back in again."

☐ **IS IT a coincidence that, in the week in which Methuen's 1994 spring list flops on the desks of literary editors and booksellers, Frank Delaney should sue his ex-publisher Hodder for breach of contract over a book of letters by Sir John Betjeperson? Methuen's list bears on its front cover a photograph of the straw-hatted, cigarette-puffing Poet Laureate, taken in August 1955. The Reed imprint's lead title for the spring is volume one of *John Betjeman's Letters, 1926-51*, edited by his daughter Candida Lycett Green.**

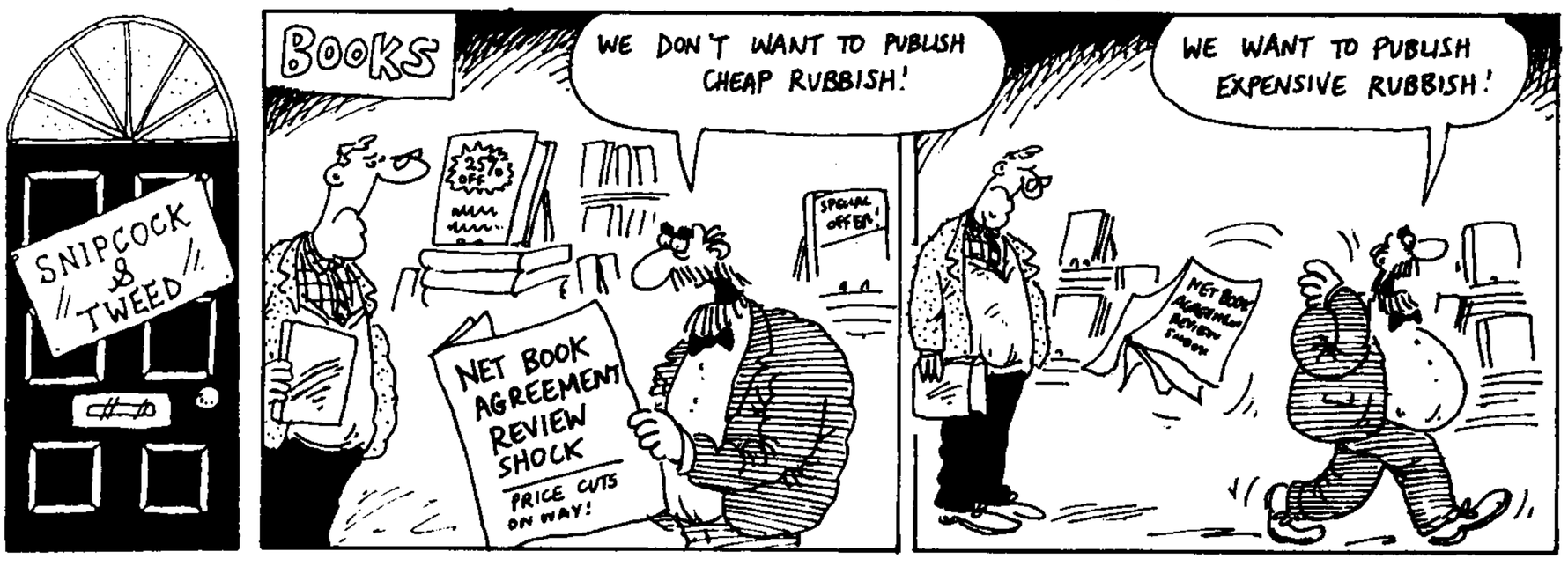
■ *BLACKWELLS, the blue-blooded publishing firm, are changing redundancy terms. Those earning more than £26,000 are having their terms improved. The very few who earn more than £36,400 will get £1400 for every year served, compared to £800 now. To pay for these increases, the lower orders are having their terms reduced, from £800 a year served to £400.*

☐ JOHN Rimington, in public life chief executive of the Health and Safety Executive (in private life Mr Stella Rimington), has arranged to meet senior representatives of the upmarket bookselling chains Blackwells, Heffers, Austicks and John Smith for a pre-Christmas noggin on 6 December.

Eye readers will recall that earlier in the year the HSE decreed that henceforth its publications would be obtainable only from branches of Pentos.

If Rimington consumes humble pie when he meets the booksellers on 6 December and concedes that proper national distribution of HSE publications is more important than limiting distribution to one increasingly discredited organisation, honour and efficiency may yet be achieved.

'Bookworm'



footnotes

Cost o' Foster

THERE WAS prompt action when the *Guardian* (23 November) revealed that Sir Christopher Foster, who had just been appointed to the new privatised Railtrack, was also an adviser to the Secretary of State for Transport, John MacGregor.

A question to Railtrack from the *Eye* produced this remarkable reply: "I gather that Sir Christopher ceased to be the Secretary of State's adviser as soon as his appointment to Railtrack was announced." Quick as a flash, he stopped advising MacGregor on privatisation so he could take up his plum post on the new privatised railway.

Sir Christopher (knighted by Thatcher in 1986) is a director and head of Economics Practice at Coopers and Lybrand, the big accountancy firm. He first started pushing for rail privatisation with his friend Michael Portillo when the latter became Minister of State for Transport in 1988. No one was more responsible for the fantastic notion of Railtrack than Sir Christopher.

Public opinion polls show that less than 20 per cent of the population support rail privatisation. But not everyone will lose out by it. The government and British Rail needed expert advice on the privatisation plans. From all the firms available to them they chose, er, Coopers and Lybrand (director: Sir Christopher Foster).

Sir Christopher Foster and friends, MacGregor (left) and Portillo

Coopers wrote a report on franchising for Railtrack. It cost £1.6m of the public money which Ministers like Portillo and MacGregor are always striving to save. But that's not all. Coopers will soon be back with the begging bowl for more — they say they've just produced yet another report.

So while Sir Christopher waits to take up his appointment to Railtrack his firm is slurping up millions of pounds of public money from Railtrack. Surely, there's something here that's not quite right?

The *Eye* asked Railtrack about it. Pay attention to the reply: "Sir Christopher's working from a different bit of Coopers Lybrand, if you see what I mean. Another bit of the firm has been working with us as a consultant on access charging - but it's a completely separate area of the company.

"I understand that Sir Christopher has made it clear to Bob Horton [chairman of Railtrack] that he will not be able to advise Railtrack on any matter which will affect Coopers' commercial interests, nor will he be invited to give any information on any such matter".

Poor Sir Christopher! This means that he won't be able to advise on access charging - the key to the whole Railtrack idea -- since his firm's interests are closely affected by it. He'll just have to keep quiet.

Fact: BP reject Bob Horton, MacGregor's choice as Railtrack chairman, has been a close friend of MacGregor ever since the two men were at St Andrews University.

Another fact: Earlier this year Horton scooped up an astonishing 400 per cent pay rise in good public money.

One further fact: Another MacGregor appointment as Railtrack director is Beverley Anderson. MacGregor has been an admirer of Mrs Anderson since 1989, when she was a loyal and trusted member of the ill-fated National Curriculum Council and MacGregor was Secretary of State for Education.

Sins of commission

■ **LADY THATCHER is expected to give evidence at the Scott inquiry into Iraqgate on 8 or 9 December. Other VIPs lined up for questioning are Sir Robin Butler, head of the Cabinet Office, and his master, Prime Minister John Major. These two are not expected at the inquiry until January. This is rather odd since Thatcher was Prime Minister when British arms were pouring into Iraq, and might have expected to be interrogated last.**

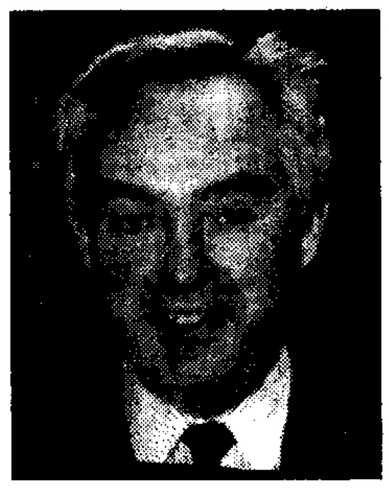
This strange running order, and the fact that public questioning is expected to be over by the end of February at the latest, casts further doubt on the resolve of Lord Justice Scott to get to the root of the matter. Certainly, in the last fortnight the inquiry has got firmly stuck.

The week starting 22 November was taken up almost exclusively with evidence from Eric Beston, the official at the DTI responsible for export control. Mr Beston was asked interminably about arms export control procedures which have long since been established. He was also asked in the most meticulous detail about the Iraqi-owned company Matrix Churchill and its involvement with British intelligence. Almost everything he said has already come out.

A sad pattern emerges — that the inquiry is concerned only with contradictions in Ministers' statements to Parliament and the government's double-dealing in the Matrix Churchill affair. Two far more vital questions as yet unasked and unanswered in public are:

1) What was the total volume of British arms exports to Iran and Iraq during the embargo of 1984-1991?

2) Who got commissions on these illegal arms sales, and how much were they?



INTERMINABLE: Eric Beston

If Lord Justice Scott wants the answers, he will have to call senior directors of arms companies (especially if they have been connected with arms exports control at the Ministry of Defence), bankers with connections to the arms industry, intelligence officers and commission agents.

To date not a single witness from any of these categories has been called in public (unless you count the chairman of Eagle Trust, David James, who had very little to contribute). So those following the inquiry have no idea either about the volume of the illegal arms sales or of the extent to which important people profited from them.

The conviction of Gordon Foxley, a former Grade 6 junior official at the MOD who managed to accumulate £1.5m in bribes from three relatively small arms companies, gave a glimpse of the scale of corruption involved. The question the Lord Justice might ask himself is: if a grade 6 MOD official can salt away £1.5m, what about the Grade 1-5 brigade, and their friends in business, government and intelligence?

Quote to remember: From Mr John Reed, editor of *Defence Industry Digest*, in the *Independent*, 4 November: "In the late 1980s a senior manager of a large defence contractor told me that the British MOD had the reputation of being the most corrupt in Europe".

BERNIE BREAKS WIND

■ **THE NEW magazine the *Country Guardian* was launched earlier this year to "oppose the desecration of the countryside by wind farms". A lot of people from Cornwall to Calderdale who don't like the sight or sound of the farms have subscribed.**

They should read the small print. It reveals that an "adviser" is Sir Bernard Ingham, former press officer to M. Thatcher. Ingham seldom loses a chance to slag off the wind farms as "bog brushes in the sky". He is specially incensed about two wind farms near his birthplace of Hebden Bridge, and attacked them angrily and often in his column in the Hebden Bridge Times. One article was headed "Nuclear Power Is Greener Than Wind Farms".

The nuclear industry, needless to say, are delighted with the *Country Guardian* and its message. Nuclear enthusiasts are worried that if people take wind power seriously, loss-making nuclear power stations could lose a slice of their enormous government subsidy.

Sir Bernard Ingham of course has more than a passing interest in these matters. He is a public relations adviser to the nuclear industry, and his clients include British Nuclear Fuels, Nuclear Electric and the British Nuclear Industry Forum.

The Power of the Lord

■ WHEN THE newly-privatised Eastern Electricity company buried, deep underground, the high-voltage cables which disfigured the lovely Suffolk village of Marlesford, no one was more chuffed than the lord of the manor, Lord Marlesford himself. As soon as the decision was made — in July 1992 — Lord Marlesford wrote to Mr George Fisher, distribution engineer of Eastern Electricity, exclaiming: "We are all delighted."

He went on to rejoice that all sorts of public bodies were lobbing in money: Suffolk Coastal District £10,000; Suffolk County Council (former councillor, Lord Marlesford) £1,500; and Marlesford Parish Council (chairman, Lord Marlesford) £150.

Mr Fisher was invited to discuss the scheme with Lordy at his home, Marlesford Hall, and soon afterwards his lordship wrote again: "We are delighted to dig to your specification without any charge to Eastern Electricity the necessary trench inside our Poplar Meadow from opposite White Cottages to the corner, for you to lay your cable in. This is our personal contribution to the excellent scheme."

The work was quickly completed, and on 21 May this year the peer, in his capacity as chairman of Marlesford Parish Council, wrote once more to Mr Fisher "to record our delight and appreciation". He promised "a suitable ceremony" to celebrate.

The ceremony in September is recorded (see picture) in the current edition of *Cable*, the house magazine of Eastern Electricity. No less a celebrity than Mr John Selwyn Gummer, Secretary of State for the Environment, turned up to share in the champagne and fun.

The *Cable* report somehow forgot to mention that Lord Marlesford, pictured clutching Mr Gummer in a fraternal embrace, is a director of Eastern Electricity. When he was plain ordinary Mr Mark Schreiber he did four years at Tory Central Office and became a special adviser to the Heath government. He was an obvious choice in 1990 for the board of the newly-privatised electricity company and was ennobled by Major in 1991.

Might there have been a conflict of interest in his directorship of a company which had so efficiently improved the amenities(and land values) of his village and his stately home? A spokesman for Eastern Electricity told the *Eye*: "Lord Marlesford is a renowned environmental campaigner, and as chairman of the Council for the Protection of Rural England, his personal enthusiasm and his considerable contacts were instrumental in bringing together the various parties who were concerned in setting up the amenity scheme. His interest and personal involvement have been fully known throughout by everyone involved, including those within the company and outside. However, the nominations for inclusion in the scheme were put forward by the various local authorities who recommended them on their individual merits and according to set criteria, the main one of which was that they had to be in designated locations."

BACKSLAPPERS' BALL: VIPs celebrate at Marlesford
Left to right — Paul Oliver, British Telecom, John Devaney, Eastern Electricity, John Gummer MP, Lord Marlesford, Sir John Johnson, Chairman of the Countryside Commission, Keith Burnett, Chairman Suffolk Coastal Council and Jenny Page, Chief Executive, English Heritage and newly appointed director of Railtrack

Touche touché

■ **TOUCHE ROSS, the big accountants, were terribly upset by the *Daily Telegraph*'s recent front-page report that some of its top experts were boycotted by the government because of Touche's role in the great Barlow Clowes swindle. Ever since, the firm has been keen to highlight the very good relations it has with the government, especially the Treasury.**

A good example was the internal memo sent round to all Touche staff on 9th September introducing the new director of the commercial valuations centre in corporate finance — one Antony Tracey. The memo was written by senior partner Martin Clarke, who drooled: "Working within the Policy division of the Treasury, he (Antony Tracey) was called upon to advise government Ministers i.e. the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, and the Minister of State (Treasury) when any question concerning the value of a business entity arose in the course of government business."

Wait a moment. A senior Treasury spokesman told the *Eye*: "We have no record of Mr Tracey".

No record of a man who once advised the Chancellor? What had Touche Ross to say about that? *Eye* inquiries there were answered by no less than George Westropp, communications director. He said: "Thank you for sending this to us, which I read intrigued, fascinated. I suppose all I can say at the moment is thank you for bringing it to our attention and it's something we're going to look at in some urgency."

Any more detailed reply will be passed on.

NEW LEEDS: VERY INTERESTING

ONE AWKWARD problem with the new Tory quangos — the gangs of important people encouraged by the government to take control of public life — is that the important people keep stumbling over their own interests.

A classic case is the Leeds Development Corporation, which was set up to get things moving, and given huge planning powers previously wielded by elected councils. In April this year the LDC got an application to develop some land at Bridge Road, Kirkstall.

Whoops! David Richardson, a prominent surveyor in the City, was a member of the LDC. He was also agent for the plan to develop the land at Bridge Road. Obviously Mr Richardson couldn't take part in any decision about the exciting plans for Bridge Road. A spokesman for the LDC tells the *Eye*: "Mr Richardson has either not attended Board meetings while this matter has been reported on the Agenda, or declared an interest".

One of the main beneficiaries of the Bridge Road development was the Leeds Rugby Union Club.

Whoops! Two directors of the Leeds Development Corporation - Mr Richardson and Mr John Jackson - and a senior officer, Mr Stuart Kenny, are patrons of the rugby club. This has involved the Corporation in a lot of legal inquiries about whether the three patrons had an interest to declare. The LDC spokesman told the *Eye*: "Legal advice has been received from the Corporation's solicitors that vice-presidency of the rugby club was not a declarable interest".

That still wasn't the end of the matter because the rugby club announced that they intended to move to a bit of land near Shadwell. If they moved there, the effect would be to help remove an adjacent piece of land from the green belt. And an application had already been made to do just that, on behalf of a trust called the PAH Hartley 1972 Settlement.

Whoops! Mr Peter (PAH) Hartley is chairman of the Leeds Development Corporation. Mr Hartley says he has never had any interest in the land owned by the Settlement. John Illingworth, a Labour councillor in Leeds, tried to find out if any of Mr Hartley's family are beneficiaries of the Settlement. He can't get an answer. Neither can the *Eye*.

LEEDS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

It looks as though this problem has blown over because the rugby club has for the moment withdrawn its application to set up at Shadwell. But the long hours of questions, answers and legal advice show just how difficult it is for the new VIP quangos to help the inner cities without seeming somehow to help themselves or their rugby clubs.

THE THINGS THEY SAY

"It is possible for mothers to bring up a family while working if they organise their time".
Baroness Thatcher,
Independent, November 10.

You can write to Paul Foot at 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG,or leave a message for him on 071 287 3183

In the City. . .*see over*

In the City

THE REASON for the back-to-back Serious Farce Office fiascos over Terry Ramsden and Roger Levitt is very simple. The SFO is running scared for its future. After less than six years the writing is clearly on the Elm Street wall. The SFO is not working.

The humiliating plea bargains, which created the opportunity for the absurdly lenient sentencing of such major league City fraudsters such as Ramsden and Levitt, were prompted by a growing panic inside the SFO produced by a run of embarrassing defeats and increasing trepidation about what the BCCI, Brent Walker and, most of all, Maxwell trials next year will bring. Further failures could well see a review of the SFO and its role, resulting in major changes in personnel and policy — changes already being mooted by those with close dealings with the Seriously Flawed Office.

The impact of the collapse of the T.C. Coombs case in August, the Polly Peck case against John Turner in October and the Therm-A-Stor case the week before the Ramsden deal has clearly created a mood of desperation in which any guilty plea, no matter to whatever minor offence, is seen as a "result". After all, it goes in director George Staple's win column in his annual report — the only justification for the SFO's existence at a cost of £21 million a year. Judges can be blamed for sentencing.

That paranoid policy was given a further unwelcome boost on Friday when, largely unnoticed in the Levitt furore, the SFO lost yet another case for lack of evidence. After 13 days of legal argument the Duralite charges against a Coombs client, Australian stock promoter Malcolm Johnson, and two associates were thrown out by the judge.

The Duralite setback was the latest in what is proving a very bad year for the SFO in its supposed role as City fraudbusters. So far it has failed to convict 19 of 31 defendants who pleaded not guilty — a success rate of just 39 per cent. Half of its 24 convictions have been obtained by guilty pleas.

Nor is the longer-term record any better. Since 1988 the SFO has prosecuted 270 defendants in 127 trials. It has obtained convictions against 169, but of these 100 were guilty pleas. In the cases that were fought the results were: SFO 69; Defendants 101. An overall conviction rate of just 40 per cent, considerably different from the 71 per cent figure for 1992-93 boasted of by Staple in his last report.

Such figures hardly justify the cost or even the existence of an organisation created to crack down on City crime and go where the police had failed to go before. A point Staple is only too aware of as he faces the challenges of the cases against Nasmu Virani, George Walker and the brothers Maxwell, where the word is already that all is far from well with the prosecution. Defeats in what are the last of the remaining major SFO prosecutions could make the clamour for change based on the expensive Guinness and Blue Arrow disasters irresistible.

Just how serious the SFO crisis is can be seen from three of the most recent fiascos.

Therm-A-Stor: Founder John Morris was charged with fraudulent trading following the 1990 failure of the double glazing firm once praised by Mrs Thatcher with debts of £14 million. The trial collapsed after 36 days when the SFO abandoned the case. This followed comments by the judge as to serious weaknesses in the evidence exposed by cross-examination of prosecution witness by the defence which did not even need to submit that there was no case to answer!

Ramsden: Tel voluntarily returned to London in February 1992 after five months in custody in an American jail. He faced charges arising from the collapse of Glen International which involved £323 million. But, ever the punter, Ramsden gambled that the complexity of his case (involving exotic dealings in Japanese warrants); the fact that the losers were

> **MEANWHILE there is growing speculation concerning the impending trial of cheeky chappy Terry Ramsden. Ever the punter, it is considered short odds on a minimal appearance for Tel over the collapse of his Glen International.**
>
> *Private Eye 816, 26 March 1993*

foreign banks; and the chance that the jury would warm to a man who described himself as a stockbroker from Enfield with long hair who liked a bet, would make it possible for him to cut a deal. The price, though, was no more time. Ramsden stuck to that position and it came off. Rather than take the risk of losing the case, the SFO caved in and accepted a plea to four minor charges which the judge rewarded with a suspended prison sentence. If only Tel had been as lucky with the horses.

Levitt: Outmanoeuvred all along the way since arresting Roger almost three years before, the SFO arrived at the Old Bailey in November gambling everything on just one count of fraudulent trading, which itself had been trimmed down. Levitt initially faced 60 charges involving the misappropriation of £20 million. Once the trial started it went off the rails.

Levitt's counsel, Jonathan Goldberg, doubtless on instruction, gave what one expert described as a "grossly misleading" interpretation of why the Levitt Group collapsed. Levitt, it was said, had pumped in £20 million of his own money to save it. Not true. The money came from loans or the sale of Levitt shares to insurance companies and Italian investors given a totally false picture of the Levitt finances.

It was also claimed that if the liquidator had not given away Levitt Group's 25 per cent interest in heavyweight champion Lennox Lewis the group would have been saved by Lewis's subsequent earnings. Also not true. To keep the Lewis contract involved meeting obligations to the boxer of at least £300,000 and possibly more than £1 million when the group was bust. Furthermore, Lewis had an effective veto on the purchaser of the contract and

> **Roger is clearly planning for a future untroubled by events at the Old Bailey.**
>
> *Private Eye 833, 19 November 1993*

could walk away at any time, conditions which effectively made the contract unsaleable to anyone but Lewis himself, who bought it for £18,000 aided, it is suggested, by his chosen new backer, Levitt's friend and former neighbour Panos Eliades.

So concerned were the SFO by the picture Goldberg had painted to the jury that they asked the trial judge to discharge the jury and start again. Mr Justice Laws refused. It was at that moment that Levitt, hearing of the Ramsden deal, offered to plead. But, like Ramsden, he made it clear from minute one that the deal had to mean no time inside. Desperate for a result, the SFO grasped the Levitt straw, hoping at best for a suspended sentence. The 180 days community service "punishment" was not considered plausible. But the SFO had already sold the pass by failing to follow the example of US prosecutors, who always insist on a plea to a substantive charge. They had accepted the equivalent of a parking offence.

Levitt's creditors, expected to receive less than 1p in the pound on debts of £67 million, might not agree with Mr Justice (Lack of) Laws that his sentence was appropriate. Especially as Roger will be discharged from bankruptcy automatically on December 14. Creditors of Levit Group, including clients who lost more than £1 million, received nothing. "He conned the public, now he has conned the court", was one assessment.

But whether it is rape or City robbery, judges seem to live in a different world from the public they serve. Where robbery with a pen is concerned, unlike robbery with a gun, all too often judges seem to feel a sympathy for the disgraced suit that they never feel for the equally determined and calculating robber. Many judges seem not to view such cases as serious crimes, but as offences where being found out, losing position and reputation is the greatest punishment.

Levitt and Ramsden join a lengthening line (Geoffrey Collier — fined, Tony Cole — suspended sentence) of guilty white, English, middle class fraudsters with nice families from nice homes who have been termed undeserving of prison. Judges talk about the law treating all defendants equally, but clearly fraudsters are all too often far more equal than others.

'Slicker' aka Costas Makarios
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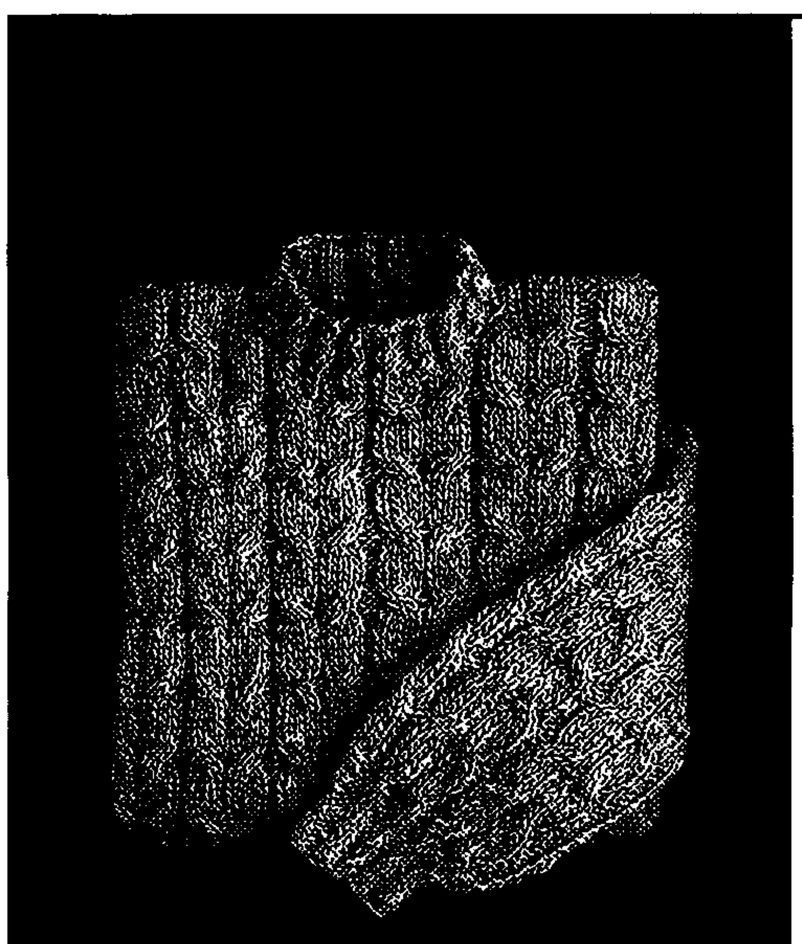

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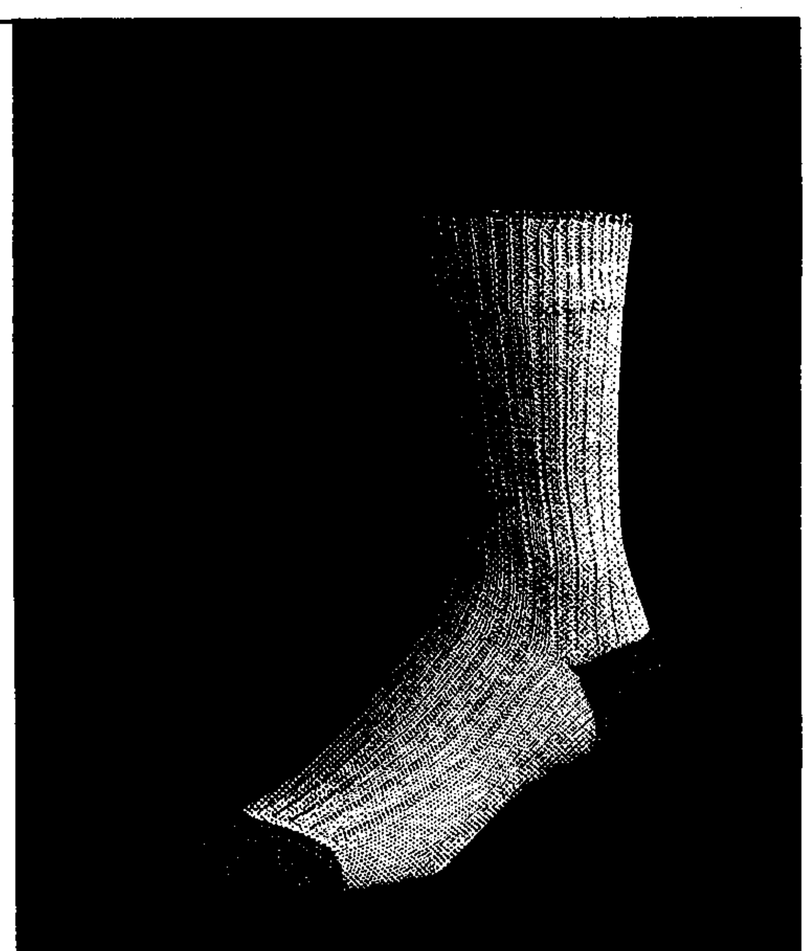

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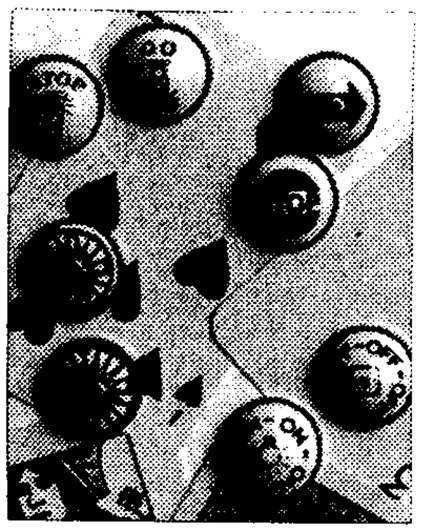

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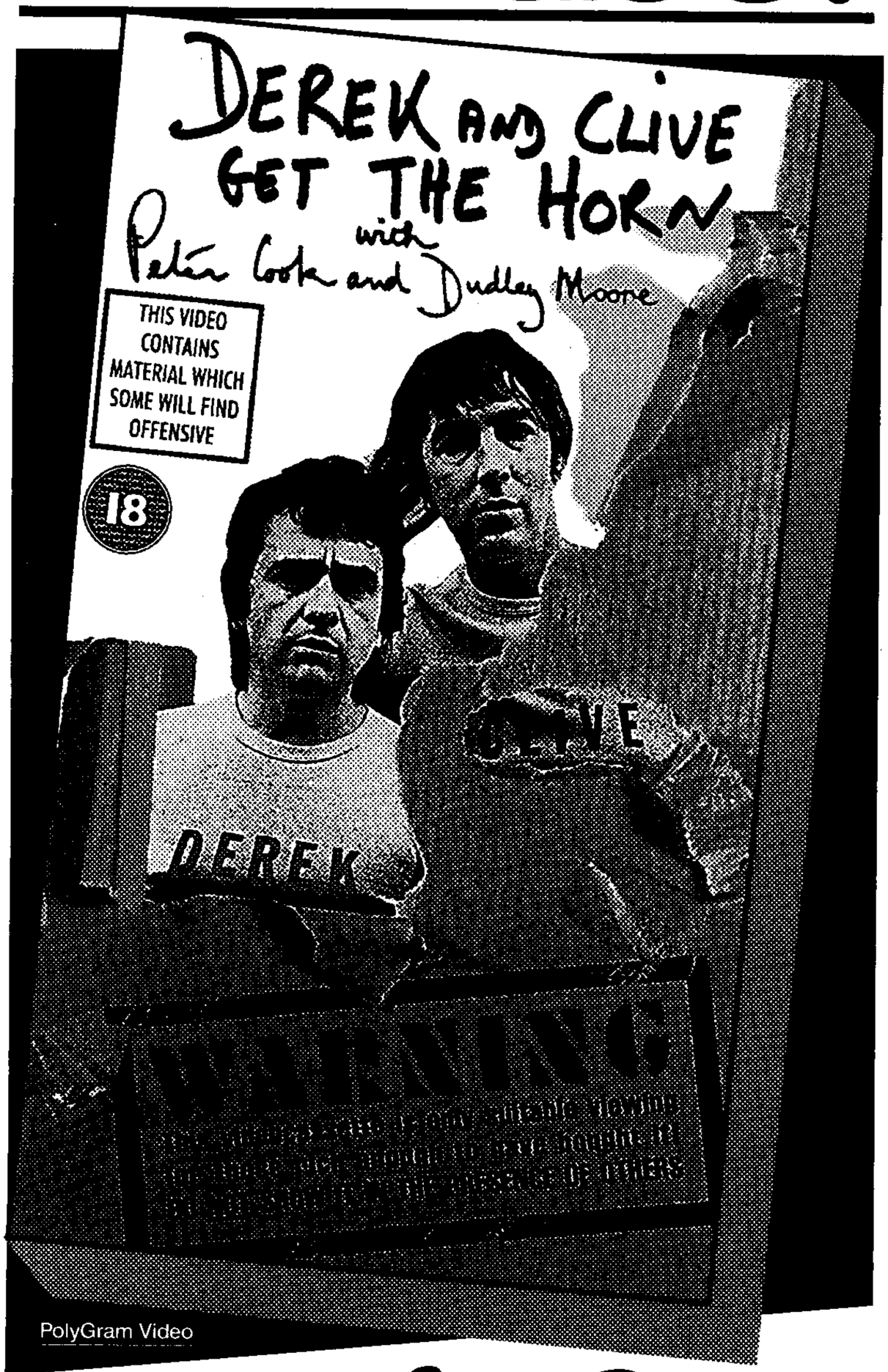

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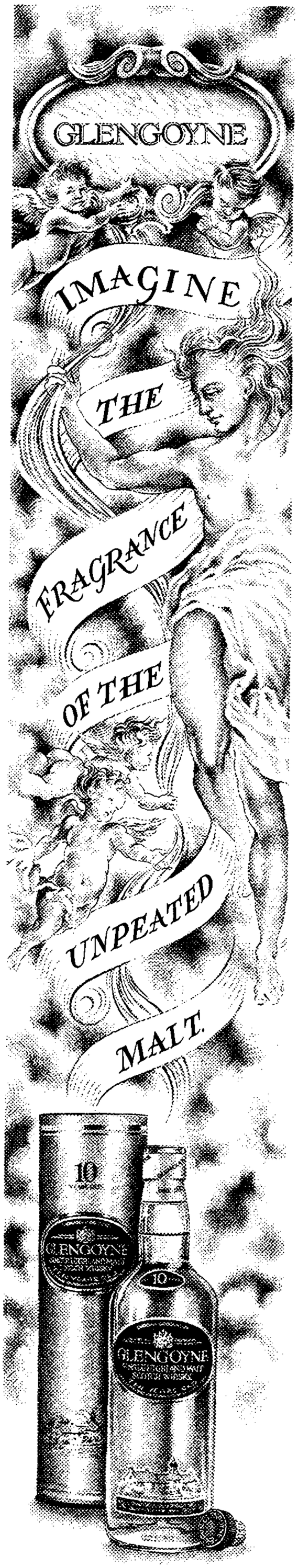

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Send your advertisements to reach us by Tuesday 7th December for inclusion in the next issue.

Quote of the week:

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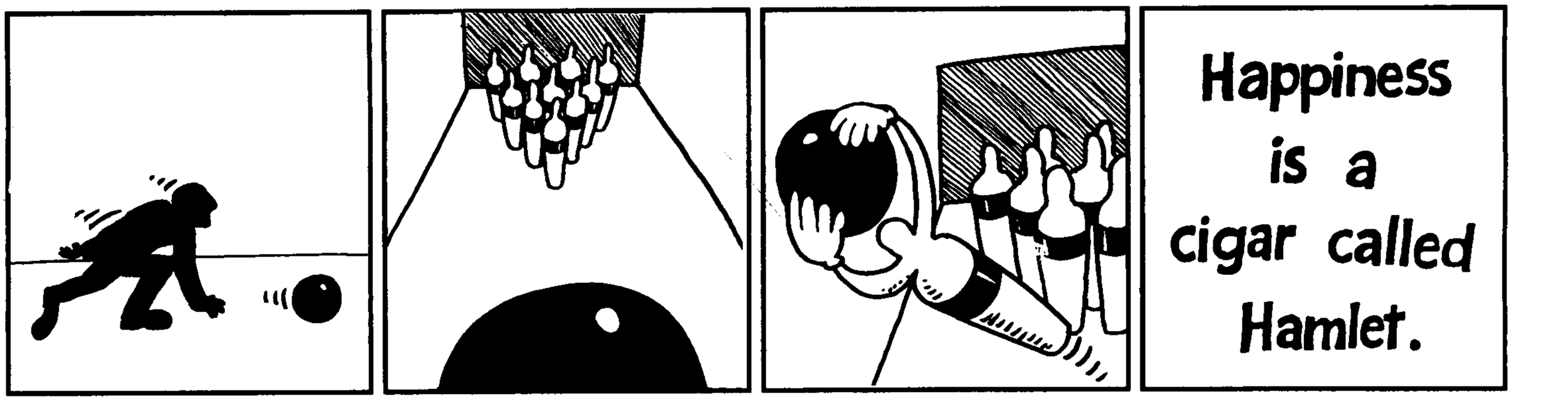

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YOUNG MALE seeks help for sex change. Anything considered. Box 6034.

YOUNG LADY needs £3,000 for charity expedition to Malaysia. Box 0334.

FILM STUDENTS need £2,000 to finish final year film. Hollywood beckoning! Please help! Box 0434.

£4,000 DESPERATELY needed to escape oppressive environment. "Anything" appreciated. Box 0534.

BARCLAYS BANK guarantor from failed business needs £10,800 to stop bankruptcy and further distress. Box 0634.

WANTED: £5,000 to start a potentially dynamite business. Box 0734.

LADY IN DISTRESS seeks generous angel for dream realization. Box 0834.

CPL(H) — £10,000 loan/award required to complete course. ALA. Box 0934.

DESPERATE: £8,000 debts. Very grateful any donations towards offering creditors 30%. Please help. KATH, Box 1034.

HELP ME ESCAPE unfair tax problem. Buy my house, investment or dirty money. Box 1134.

RETURN TICKET Boston please. 0844 260168.

£2,500 NEEDED to prove publishers wrong about my brilliant novel. Box 1234.

MATURE STUDENT seeks financial assistance for BSc course in Osteopathy. Donations, loans or advice. Box 1334.

SHIT CREEK being negotiated by eternal optimist. Barbed wire canoe becoming uncomfortable. Donations towards paddle gratefully received. Box 1434.

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FIELD SPORTS enthusiast, also interested in theatre, restaurants, literature. Wishes to meet similarly minded lady. South east/anywhere. Box 4134.

TALL SLIM attractive female counsellor (36) public school/university educated, seeks quietly confident male (36-46) who is capable of focusing attentions and affections on one woman. Box 4234.

MELBOURNE RESIDENT Englishman, interesting, well travelled, 40s, seeks pretty English girl (or Fosters girl) in Victoria for summer fun, wining, dining, good conversation and occasional nostalgia about UK. Box 4334.

ATTRACTIVE SIKH, female teacher, 27, seeks handsome articulate Indian professional boy. Is anyone there? Box 4434.

MALE, 30, TALL, told goodlooking, successful and fun. Much more to offer than this advertisement can say. Seeks special female to see where fate takes us. Be positive, reply! Box 4534.

SOMEONE OUT THERE will have an intelligent, stylish, slim woman friend who's single, about thirty and would like to meet this tall, passionate, funny, sceptic living in Newcastle. Make her write to me! Box 4634.

UNATTACHED OFFICER (and gentleman) in thirties, sought for workaholic female. Like me you've got to be tall with great sense of humour, enthusiastic, sociable and love music, art, wining and dining and travel. Don't feel I need full-time commitment right now, just fun time when our schedules coincide. Box 4734.

HANDSOME TALL upper class chappie, 38, inclined to take life too seriously, seeks beautiful younger woman to send him up and take things down. Box 4834.

LAPSED CATHOLIC, 35, intelligent, good looking, tall and usually amusing seeks original prettyish vamp 20s/30s for irreligious activities, spontaneous travelling and meaningful conversations. If you're nice but have a wicked streak and good SoH, please write with photo. Box 4934.

LOVELY MAN, highly successful academic professional, attractive, tall, blond, artistic, sporty, seeks attractive intelligent loving loveable n/s lady (35-45) for friendship, fun, frolics and more. Box 5034.

ATTRACTIVE, PROFESSIONAL lady (43), gentle, warm, considerate, great SoH, seeks preferably, not essentially, Irish male (38-50, n/s), who is educated, caring and seeking a healthy, permanent relationship. Box 2034.

ANTARCTIC HERO, 27, down South for 2.5 years needs intimate witty correspondence with imaginative females. Photo please. ALA. Box 2134.

YOUNG LADY, 31, blonde, likes laughing, seeks professional type. (London) address? Box 2234.

WEST SUSSEX winter looks bleak without Wenceslas. Attractive, intelligent, professional female, 31, seeks witty single male to go forth with. Box 2334.

WANTED! ARE YOU crazy but caring, cultured but fun, attractive but single, professional by day, wild by night? Extrovert, sensual London lady (29) is looking for you. Box 2434.

YOUNG SOMERSET lad seeks female for Ugandan discussions. Box 2534.

DESPERATE AND dateless — 2 hard working females (28) urgently seek distraction of the male variety. Please help! Must be unattached. Box 2634.

SHORT, FAT, ugly, compulsive liar seeks dissimilar (M, 27). Box 2734.

YOUNG MAN (33) seeks to treat female companion (20-35) to trips abroad. Letter and photo please. Box 2834.

SINGLE MALE, 29, tall, good humoured, attractive, solvent, seeks sincere attractive female, 24-33, for evenings out and hopefully relationship. Photo appreciated. Box 3230.

SUCCESSFUL AMERICAN art dealer, very young 50, with sense of humour and very generous, looking for slim girl, any nationality, 20-30, fun loving, intelligent and tolerant. Join me for dinner when I visit London every 2nd month. Letter and photo please. Box 6631.

AMERICAN OR Australian, attractive male, holiday companion required — 27-32, GSoH and fun-loving — for single, 29, female leading to a relationship if no delays en route. Box 3333.

WEALTHY DEGENERATE (40) seeks well-heeled like-minded female for general debauchery and possible merger. Phone/photograph essential. Box 3733.

MARRIED AMERICAN male, 38, London based (wife in States & approves), handsome, easygoing, successful, seeks busty, proportionately small-waisted female for ongoing safe erotic relationship. Photo please. Box 4033.

TALL EX ARMY officer (40) seeks sensitive, thinking lady 35+ to share fun, food and music (S/West). Box 6534.

DEAR SANTA, please bring me a cheerful, affectionate female (35-45ish) to be my lover. You may tell her that I am a reasonably attractive married man (36), able and willing to suspend disbelief. Yours sincerely, TM of London. Box 6134.

ATTRACTIVE INDEPENDENT female, 29, little inclination for beginner's Swahili or Peruvian basket weaving seeks male distraction in an otherwise work orientated existence. Leicester based. Box 6634.

HANDSOME, SUCCESSFUL, intelligent, wealthy City gent (36) (everything but girl syndrome) seeks mild, virtuous, fair lady (late 20s/early 30sish) for mutuality, fun, laughter, etc. Photo optional, phone essential. Enquiries to Box 1534.

UNATTACHED OVERSEAS male 41 seeks erotic female penfriend. Meet later if we dare! Box 1634.

SECRET GARDEN? Understanding, discreet, enthusiastic man would love to explore. Box 1734.

LANGUAGE GRADUATE thirties interests travel, arts, restaurants, seeks similar male. Box 1834.

SHOT DOWN in flames. Tall, intelligent, good looking, blue-eyed bloke seeks understanding affectionate female for repairs and larf. Long term maintenance may be required. Box 3434.

HANDSOME PROFESSIONAL male, 35, tall, slim, SoH, seeks attractive intelligent female for passionate affair. Edinburgh. Box 5134.

SHORT AND SWEET (this ad), tall and sweet (this gent). Professional, 40 years young, sincere, good humoured, seeks special lady. Photo appreciated. Box 5234.

SPAIN? BIKER type female required for similar guy, blonde, 5'7", strong, unconventional, with boy of 9yrs. Working 3 nights weekly in a disco. Photo please and phone? Box 5334.

FELICITY KENDALL type, 31, seeks kindly professional chap to be there for. (London) address? Box 5434.

HANDSOME BASTARD seeks sussed, horny feminist (20s/30s), roots. Box 5534.

ARTICULATE MALE, 37, presentable, amusing, single London professional seeks attractive lady. Xmas travels? Box 5634.

OLD FOLKIE/ young fogey type, 34 (well, I know what I mean), seeks young person type who doesn't know where she's going, and doesn't want a navigator. London. Box 5734.

AMERICAN? PRETTY lady seeks single guy (30s) fully-loaded with warmth, personality and humour. (Brit men shrivelled my mistletoe.) Box 5834.

SUCCESSFUL BUT unconventional professional man, university graduate, now turned showbiz promoter. Slim, single, 41. Seeks tall slim intelligent female. North of England preferred but can travel. Box 2934.

MALE, 41, ARTIST, solvent, tall, dark, married, frustrated, seeks sexy lady any age, who would like a discreet romance. Lincs, London, anywhere. Box 3034.

GRADUATE MALE, 28, seeks similar female for day-time professional rivalry and night-time London socialising. Tedious, serious, old-fashioned, unfit, dowdy secretaries need not reply. Box 3134.

INEXPERIENCED, ATTRACTIVE male graduate, 25, seeks lady 40+ for tuition. Box 3834.

GOODLOOKING, PROFESSIONAL woman seeks attractive, successful man for commitment. 30ish. Herts/London area. Photo please. Box 3934.

AFFECTIONATE MALE, 28, wacky SoH, seeks lass 20-30 for laughs, long country walks and maybe love? Looks not essential, brains and bright smile a must. Yorkshire. Box 4034.

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Our box numbers are for personal advertisers only (not commercial) — the cost is £8.00.

HOW THEY WORK

Replies are sent to Private Eye and are strictly confidential. We mail them to you initially about 2 weeks after your advertisement has appeared and then (approx) fortnightly for a total of 8 weeks.

REPLYING TO BOX NUMBERS

Only one reply — Send your reply in a stamped addressed envelope to Private EyeSmalls (address above) and mark the box number clearly on the front of the envelope.

More than one reply — Put each reply in an unstamped envelope, seal it and mark the relevant box number clearly on the front of each envelope. Then put them all in a larger stamped envelope addressed to Private Eye Smalls (address above).

Your reply is then forwarded by us to the advertiser.

PROFESSIONAL MALE, 48, affectionate, tied, own house, offers long-term intimate relationship to educated, plump, loving lady, weekdays initially, SW London. Box 3234.

LONESOME IN London. Lady lawyer looks for laughs and longterm love. Box 3334.

UNUSUALLY DESIRABLE man (38, professional, tall with good physique) seeks pretty partner whose slender frame belies a warm heart and an ample bosom. London/S.East. Box 5934.

HANDSOME GUY needs fun gal, Oxford/Northants/Bucks/Warwicks. Box 3434.

PROFESSIONAL GENT, 40, seeks slim, TV-oriented lady, 21-35, for permanent relationship. Tayside/anywhere. Box 3534.

MATURE PCW seeks passionate postal affair with pretty young laptop. Box 3634.

HANDSOME, 27, LOVES music, books, dancing, leaving London. Unmoved by local pub. Will reply — photo appreciated. Box 3734.

Eye Soldier

SMASHING DASHING officer in hell hole, seeks pretty witty female to correspond with, and keep me sane. Box 6234.

CULTURAL AND chivalrous infantry officer seeking charming beauty to reduce his outrageous bank balance on return from the combat-zone. Box 6334.

CANADIAN NAVAL officers seek exciting babes to party with during UK leave. Box 6434.

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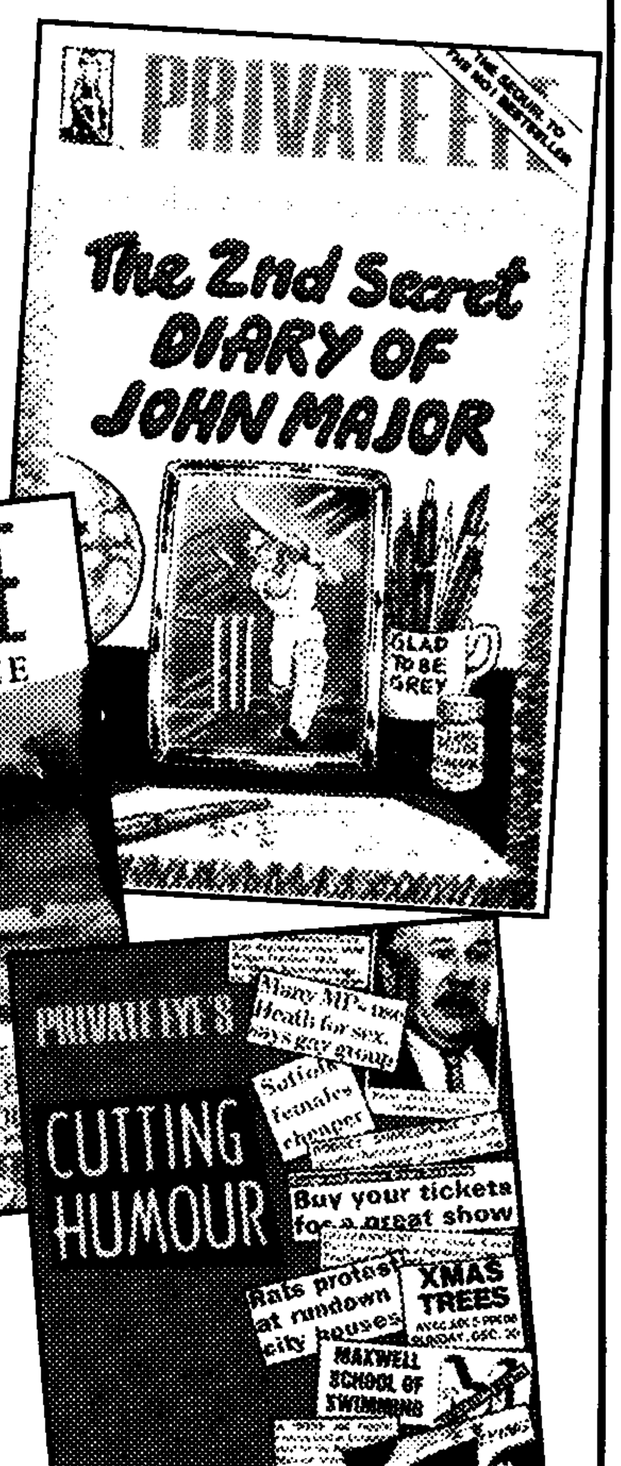

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SURGEON, 34, looking for romance, with that illusive special lady. Must have sense of fun and adventure, and enjoy entertaining and being entertained. Any area. Ring 0839 514153

PROFESSIONAL FEMALE, young & attractive 38, no ties, is searching for a good looking, confident but caring male. Are they extinct or do you qualify? Ring 0839 514059

BUBBLY ITALIAN MAN, 30, unique example, very attractive and irradiating, seeks shining, attractive, witty, independent females (20-35) for nights out, friendship, let's see! Ring 0839 514162

VERY ATTRACTIVE, tall, curvacious redhead, 37, intelligent, articulate and caring, nonsmoker, no ties, seeks tallish, attractive gent, 38-48, to share life with. Must be intelligent. Ring 0839 514074

KNIGHT, 41, own castle and steed, seeks damsel (preferably not in distress) to romance, cherish, and generally carry off into the sunset. Ring 0839 514170

SELF-OPINIONATED and perverse female, 41, seeks enterprising and self-confident male, 30+, to demonstrate that amongst other things, romance is not dead. Ring 0839 514113

charming, cheeky, successful, smart and scrumptious single man, 43, needs a curvacious, crazy, sensuous, super, single female, 28-35, for stir fry dishes and ice cream. Ring 0839 514188

BEAUTIFUL, GREEN EYED Cancerian goddess (young 42) seeks open, sensitive, self aware, emotionally secure knight. Water/earth signs, born between '45-'51 preferably. Ring 0839 514217

SLIGHTLY MAD POET, n/s, Fishattarian, male, 36, 5ft 7in, slimmish, loves music, (rock) films, sci-fi books, pubs, eating out and long winter nights, seeks female, 28-37, for romance and all the above. Ring 0839 514210

UNIQUE WOMAN, warm, attractive, lively, sincere and demanding, seeks interesting man, professional, intelligent, solvent, tall, own hair, mid 30s to early 40s, for loving relationship. Ring 0839 514245

LOOKING FOR A MAN? then why not try our new Library Line service. To listen to a selection of past, present and even future male Opening Lines advertisers, just dial this number. Ring 0839 514222

IRISH PROFESSIONAL woman, 33, n/s, impulsive and a little crazy, seeks interesting, intelligent man, 30-45, with gsoh, for fun, friendship and possibly romance. Ring 0839 514261

ENTREPRENEURIAL yet caring male lawyer, 29, with a thirst for the good things in life. Seeks intelligent and personalitied female. Ring 0839 514233

BRIGHT, WARM HEARTED woman, 38, film director, seeks confident, lively, affectionate man (perhaps Celtic) for laughing, talking, eating out, pizzas in, and travelling to new places. Ring 0839 514289

YOUNG MAN, 31, professional, seeks slim female, 20-35, for friendship/ relationship, interests include art, cinema, country walks and eating out. Ring 0839 514309

THE SEARCH FOR A WOMAN might just be over. If you would like to listen to a selection of past, present and even future Opening Lines female advertisers, then why not try our new Library Line Service. Just ring this number. Ring 0839 514333

EASYGOING, CARING, tall, good looking guy, 26, seeks caring young lady who enjoys cafes, food, shopping and European travel. Ring 0839 514930

PRETTY, INTELLIGENT, affectionate brunette, 25, seeks attractive, reasonably fit, male graduate, 23-34, who is also thoughtful and considerate. Ring 0839 514627

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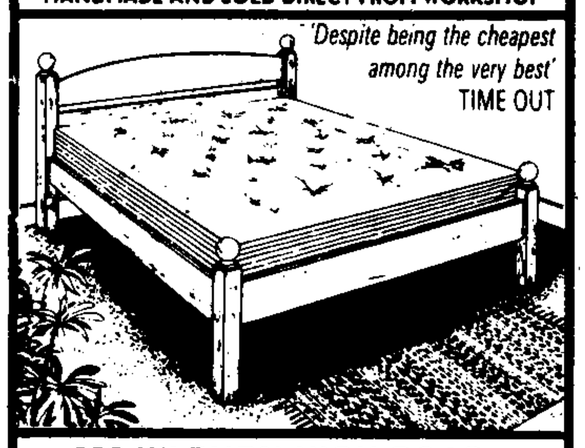

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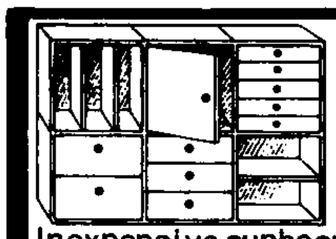

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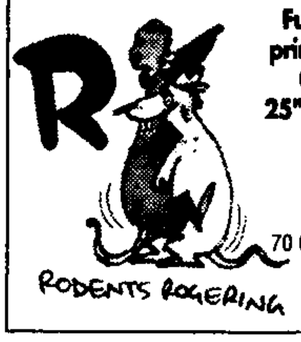

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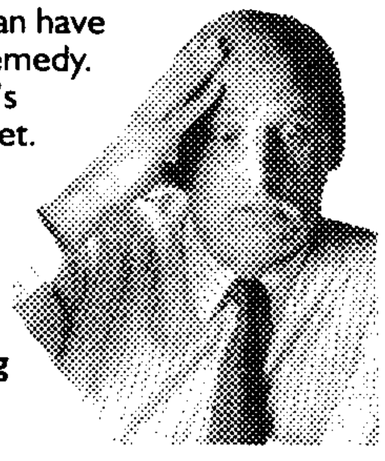

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